

WHAT HAPPENED AT NO GUN RI?  
THE CHALLENGE OF CIVILIANS ON THE BATTLEFIELD

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
Military History

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
2003

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 06-06-2003		2. REPORT TYPE thesis		3. DATES COVERED (FROM - TO) 05-08-2002 to 06-06-2003	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE WHAT HAPPENED AT NO GUN RI?: THE CHALLENGE OF CIVILIANS ON THE BATTLEFIELD Unclassified				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Kuehl, Dale, C				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS US Army Command and General Staff College 1 Reynolds Ave Fort Leavenworth, KS66027-1352				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER ATZL-SWD-GD	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS ,				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT A1,Administrative or Operational Use 06-06-2003 US Army Command and General Staff College 1 Reynolds Ave Ft. Leavenworth, KS66027-1352					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT On 26 July 1950 American soldiers from 2-7 Cavalry fired on civilians near No Gun Ri, South Korea. These civilians remained trapped under a bridge between North Korean and American forces for three days. In September 1999, the Associated Press (AP) reported that American soldiers killed hundreds of Koreans at No Gun Ri, under the orders of officers with a blatant disregard for civilian life. This story prompted an investigation by the Department of the Army Inspector General that found evidence of war crimes inconclusive, but acknowledged that Americans killed Korean civilians in the vicinity of No Gun Ri. Drawing on primary and secondary sources this thesis examines the actions at No Gun Ri to determine whether American forces committed war crimes and includes detailed research on the political situation in South Korea, the tactics of the North Korean People's Army, and the quality of the American Army in 1950. A thorough analysis of primary documents reveals a more complicated battlefield than presented by the AP. Direct orders were not given by officers to shoot civilians, but a poorly crafted policy from Eighth Army, and failure by subordinate commanders to modify the policy resulted in unnecessary civilian casualties.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS No Gun Ri; South Korea; Korean War; Army; War crimes; Tactics; North Korean People's Army; Battlefield; Civilians; Casualties; Eighth Army					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:		17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)		18. NUMBER OF PAGES 121	
a. REPORT Unclassified				19. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Buker, Kathy kathy.buker@us.army.mil	
b. ABSTRACT Unclassified		c. THIS PAGE Unclassified		19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER International Area Code Area Code Telephone Number 9137583138 DSN 5853138	
				Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98) Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39.18	

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

WHAT HAPPENED AT NO GUN RI?: THE CHALLENGE OF CIVILIANS ON THE BATTLEFIELD by MAJ Dale C. Kuehl, 121 pages.

On 26 July 1950 American soldiers from 2-7 Cavalry fired on civilians near No Gun Ri, South Korea. These civilians remained trapped under a bridge between North Korean and American forces for three days. In September 1999, the Associated Press (AP) reported that American soldiers killed hundreds of Koreans at No Gun Ri, under the orders of officers with a blatant disregard for civilian life. This story prompted an investigation by the Department of the Army Inspector General that found evidence of war crimes inconclusive, but acknowledged that Americans killed Korean civilians in the vicinity of No Gun Ri. Drawing on primary and secondary sources this thesis examines the actions at No Gun Ri to determine whether American forces committed war crimes and includes detailed research on the political situation in South Korea, the tactics of the North Korean People's Army, and the quality of the American Army in 1950. A thorough analysis of primary documents reveals a more complicated battlefield than presented by the AP. Direct orders were not given by officers to shoot civilians, but a poorly crafted policy from Eighth Army, and failure by subordinate commanders to modify the policy resulted in unnecessary civilian casualties.

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## ACRONYMS

AP	Associated Press
BCTP	Battle Command Training Program
CA	Civil Affairs
CAMG	Civil Affairs Military Government
CAS	Close Air Support
CAT	Category
CAV	Cavalry
CCF	Chinese Communist Forces
CP	Command Post
CPKI	Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence
CTC	Combat Training Center
FM	Field Manual
IG	Inspector General
KMAG	Korean Military Advisory Group
MGCA	Military Government Civil Affairs
MRE	Mission Rehearsal Exercise
NCO	Noncommissioned Officers
NKPA	North Korean People's Army
RCT	Regimental Combat Team
ROE	Rules of Engagement
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROKA	Republic of Korea Army
SWNCC	State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee

TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
TTP	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USMGIK	United States Military Government in Korea

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

It is the middle of the night. The regimental staff officers huddle around maps as they track the battle. A field phone breaks into the sounds of distant combat. An officer picks up the phone as a reporter records the discussion in the command post,

“Oh, Christ, there’s a column of refugees, three or four hundred of them, coming right down on B company.” A major in the command tent says to the regimental commander, “Don’t let them through.” And of course the major is right. Time and again, at position after position, this silent approach of whitened figures has covered enemy attack and, before our men had become hardened to the necessities of Korean war, had often and fatally delayed and confused our own fire. Finally the colonel says, in a voice racked with wretchedness, “All right, don’t let them through. But try to talk to them, try to tell them to go back.”

“Yeah,” says one of the little staff group, “but what if they don’t go back?”

“Well, then,” the colonel says, as though dragging himself toward some pit, “then fire over their heads.”

“Okay,” an officer says, “we fire over their heads. Then what?”

“The colonel seems to brace himself in the semidarkness of the blacked-out tent.

“Well, then, fire into them if you have to. *If you have to*, I said.”<sup>1</sup>

The next afternoon a staff officer picks up the phone in the command post. With a broken voice he responds to the report.

“My God, John, its gone too far when we are shooting children.”<sup>2</sup>

The summer of 1950 saw American soldiers in Korea fighting desperately to stop the advance of the North Korean Peoples Army (NKPA). The North Koreans pushed the Americans back at Osan, Pyongtaek, the Kum River, and Taejon. Reports of guerrillas wearing civilian clothes spread throughout the ranks. John Osborne, a reporter and

photographer for *Life* magazine, witnessed the anguish of the commander as he struggled to deal with a problem for which he was unprepared. In vivid detail he described the challenges American soldiers faced in trying to stop an enemy pressing them from all sides and using civilian garb and refugee columns to hide their movement.

Osborne criticized political and military leaders for failing to understand the nature of the war in Asia. He believed that the US could not win the war with only military means. Yet, until leaders found other means, soldiers would have to fight a savage war “alien to the American tradition and shocking to the American mind.”<sup>3</sup>

According to Osborne these methods included:

The blotting out of villages where the enemy *may* be hiding; the shooting and shelling of refugees who *may* include North Koreans in the anonymous white clothing of the Korean countryside, or who *may* be screening an enemy march upon our positions, or who *may* be carrying broken-down rifles or ammunition clips or walkie-talkie parts in their packs and under their trousers or skirts.<sup>4</sup>

Fifty years later, actions on the Korean War battlefield dominate domestic and international politics in the Republic of Korea. Students gather outside the Myongdong Cathedral near Yonsei University in downtown Seoul. A militant student passes out pamphlets that ask, “Is Korea a colony of the United States?” and “Why don’t we retrieve our ownership of our own country?” Next to the busy sidewalk filled with university students heading to class, the protesters shout, “Expel the Americans” and “Americans Go Home.” Nearby portraits of alleged victims of American crime cover a stone wall.<sup>5</sup>

Another protest, this time the crowd is older. As they gather near the gate of the American Embassy, policemen in riot gear stand ready to intervene. Other policemen wait in buses around the corner on a side street, ready to respond in a moment’s notice. Many doze as they wait. The protesters shout their slogans against the US and express

their anger towards President Clinton's expression of regret over the killing of civilians at a village called No Gun Ri during the Korean War.<sup>6</sup>

Chong Ku Do, a protest leader, expresses his outrage at the Clinton statement. "The US Government is committing a treachery before history by refusing to admit that the Rogun-ri killings were a massacre of innocent civilians by US troops."<sup>7</sup> He also accused the US Government of using the No Gun Ri case to cover up other killings by American soldiers.<sup>8</sup>

The actions of American soldiers during the Korean War became an issue after the Associated Press published a story on 30 September 1999 alleging that American soldiers massacred Korean refugees at a railroad bridge near the village of No Gun Ri from 26 to 29 July 1950.<sup>9</sup> Weeks later, AP reporters Sang-Hun Choe, Charles J. Hanley, and Martha Mendoza followed up the first article with another alleging further atrocities during the withdrawal across the Naktong River to include another incident involving the shooting of refugees and the destruction of two bridges over the river.<sup>10</sup> Their book, *The Bridge at No Gun Ri*, gives the following account of actions at No Gun Ri.

Refugees dressed in white were fleeing south to get away from advancing communist forces. They carried what they could on their backs or in their ox carts, leaving most of their belongings behind. Suddenly the ground shook violently as aircraft passed overhead. Bodies and parts of bodies flew into the air. People ran in every direction, as panicked children cried. Some sought the protection of a culvert but American soldiers ordered them out. Korean witnesses said, "'fireballs' from some kind of heavy weapon came down from the hills, that soldiers on the ground had opened fire on them."<sup>11</sup> The planes flew off, but the killing continued as refugees huddled

underneath a bridge that provided shelter for a moment. Machine-gun fire tore into the refugees. Escape was impossible and attempts were met with instant death. The bodies piled up as refugees huddled behind the dead for protection. Minutes became hours, hours became days. Finally the soldiers left.<sup>12</sup>

The Associated Press (AP) described this action as a deliberate killing of noncombatants ordered by American officers. According to their story, American soldiers kept survivors of this initial attack pinned under a rail road trestle for three days, killing anyone who tried to venture out. The reporters claim that events at No Gun Ri reflected the attitudes of soldiers and the policies of higher headquarters. They assert that American soldiers needlessly killed hundreds of civilians by blowing up the Taksong-Dong and Waegwan Rivers as refugees tried to reach the UN side of the Nakdong River.<sup>13</sup> A day later Americans killed more refugees trying to wade across the river to safety.<sup>14</sup> Throughout the articles and the book, the AP painted a picture of incompetent commanders with little regard for Korean civilians and emphasized that officers committed war crimes by issuing orders to kill civilians. However, the reporters did not place any responsibility on the shoulders of the soldiers. It seems as if they see the soldiers as victims of officer incompetence.<sup>15</sup>

Not everyone agreed with the conclusions of the AP. Other news organizations to include *U.S. News and World Report* and the *Stars and Stripes* criticized the report and poked holes in the story.<sup>16</sup> One of the biggest critics was Major Robert L. Bateman, an Army historian. Bateman in *No Gun Ri: A Military History of the Korean War Incident* takes the AP reporters to task for their investigative methods and their conclusions. He takes a different view of the actions of the 2-7 Cavalry (CAV). Instead of hundreds of

civilian deaths, he considers it more likely that the battalion killed about twenty-five people, two of them enemy guerrillas. While soldiers and leaders made mistakes, the “incident at No Gun Ri was, . . . not the massacre of war crime proportions one might think it was after reading the Pulitzer Prize-winning news article.”<sup>17</sup> He sees the incident as the inevitable result of poor training, leadership, and readiness. Bateman stresses that officers did not give orders to deliberately shoot civilians. Instead, soldiers shot into a mass of refugees on their own initiative after receiving fire from someone in the crowd.<sup>18</sup>

Did American soldiers commit war crimes at No Gun Ri? Answering this question first requires a general understanding of the international environment, domestic politics in Korea and in the United States (US), and the training and readiness of the US military. Next, one must examine the actions of the soldiers on the ground as they faced an uncertain battlefield with guerrillas, refugees, and a well-trained enemy force. Finally, analysis of combat actions at the front lines leads to a critical assessment of the orders and policies of the higher headquarters.

The end of World War II left the Soviet Union and the US as the dominant powers in the world. Western Europe and the US could do little to stop the Soviet Union’s consolidation of power and influence over the countries of Eastern Europe. The aligning of nations behind the two powers led to a cold war between East and West. The Cold War emerged as not just a conflict between two major powers, but as an ideological struggle, pitting the democratic West against the communist East. Korea became a hot war that erupted from the cold.

By 1950, Korea had already endured five years of East-West conflict after the US and Russia arbitrarily divided the country at the 38th Parallel in 1945. Kim Il Sung easily

consolidated power in the north with the backing of the Soviet Union. The US tried to develop a democratic process in the South, but in the end, played a key role in the consolidation of power under Syngman Rhee. Political fighting and unrest led to executions and a guerrilla movement with ties to the communist north.<sup>19</sup> This political struggle would help to shape the Korean battlefield.

The world situation weighed heavily on domestic politics within the US. The fear of communism led to the “red scare” and the rise of Senator Joe McCarthy, who zealously sought to eradicate suspected communists from the government, particularly the State Department.<sup>20</sup> The “loss” of China to communism added fuel to the fire as republicans, led by McCarthy, accused Truman of being soft on communism.<sup>21</sup>

The lack of readiness and training of the US military greatly affected actions on the ground during the first days of the Korean War. The desire to get the boys home after World War II and the initial monopoly on nuclear weapons led to a rapid demobilization of the military. By 1950, the American Army in Japan served as a constabulary force, not an army. Eighth Army began a retraining program in 1949, but few units had gone beyond company level maneuvers.<sup>22</sup> The Army was also structurally hollow. Most infantry regiments had only two of the three infantry battalions they required, and artillery battalions had only two of three batteries. Still, the Army had problems filling the ranks of these units. Manpower shortages led to a reduction in standards for enlistment of soldiers and commissioning of officers.<sup>23</sup> On top of these challenges, the Army struggled with institutional racism left over from the war with Japan along with the racial prejudices of American society.<sup>24</sup> The combined effects of poor soldiers, weak

leaders, lack of training, and racial prejudices had a direct impact on unit cohesion and the ability to fight.

The 2-7 CAV was a microcosm of the rest of the Army when they arrived in Korea in July 1950. The battalion arrived at No Gun Ri the morning of 26 July, just a few days after debarking at Pohong-dong. The night before the battalion panicked and ran from their positions just to the east of Yongdong and finally rallied to establish a hasty defense by No Gun Ri. Soon they faced the challenge of a column of refugees to their front. For days the battalion had heard about guerrillas infiltrating in refugee columns. In one attack just days before No Gun Ri, a company from the 8th CAV, defending to the west of Yongdong held up the demolition of a bridge to allow refugees to get across. Suddenly tanks broke through the crowd firing at the defending Americans. At the same time, small arms fire came from within the crowd of refugees. Still the defenders did not blow up the bridge. Eventually enemy pressure forced the unit back through Yongdong.<sup>25</sup>

What responsibility did the soldiers of 2-7 CAV have to protect the civilians? Did they act on the direct orders of officers, or did individual soldiers act on their own to kill unarmed civilians? Were their actions necessary to stop enemy forces, or an excessive use of force out of proportion to the threat?

The dilemma the soldiers of 2-7 CAV faced at No Gun Ri was not an isolated event on the Korean battlefield. Units continuously had to deal with thousands of refugees fleeing the advancing communist army. As enemy forces bypassed front line units and guerrillas hit rear areas, many believed the infiltration of enemy soldiers wearing civilian clothes was widespread.<sup>26</sup> Eighth Army, slow in declaring policies and procedures to handle these issues, left many of these decisions in the hands of division

commanders. Finally reacting to the problem, Eighth Army published its first policy statement on refugees on 26 July, the same day as No Gun Ri. Although trying to clarify the procedures, the policy still left much up to the division commanders. How did these policies impact the soldiers at the front? Were they legal? Were they clear?

The No Gun Ri story sparked a fierce debate in the fall of 1999 on the role of the US in Korea and the conduct of the war by American forces. Decisions and actions by commanders came under scrutiny as the US and Republic of Korea launched independent investigations. The conclusions drawn by government investigations vary between the AP report and the account by Bateman. However, one common element in each version of the event is that the combination of poorly trained soldiers and questionable leadership led to a tragic event.

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<sup>1</sup>John Osborne, "Report from the Orient: Guns are not Enough," *Life*, 21 August 1950, 84-85.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Dan Kirk, "Anti-US Sentiments Rise in Seoul," *International Herald Tribune*, 6 September 2000 [newspaper on-line]; available from <http://www.iht.com/IHT/DK/00/dk060900.html>; Internet; accessed on 21 November 2002.

<sup>6</sup>"US's No-Fault Conclusion Rogun-ri Massacre Evokes Public Anger," *The People's Korea*, 25 January 2001 [newspaper on-line]; available from [http://www.korea-np.co.jp/pk/154th\\_issue/2001012511.htm](http://www.korea-np.co.jp/pk/154th_issue/2001012511.htm); Internet; accessed on 21 November 2002. Although this account is from a communist leaning web site, the actions described are similar to protests I witnessed while in Korea. (Hereafter cited as "US No-Fault Conclusion").



<sup>7</sup>Ibid. Rogun-ri is a variation on the spelling of No Gun Ri when translated into English.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Sang-Hun Choe, Charles J. Hanley, and Martha Mendoza, "G.I.'s Tell of a US Massacre in Korean War," *New York Times*, 30 September 1999, 1.

<sup>10</sup>Sang-Hun Choe, Charles J. Hanley, and Martha Mendoza, "Veterans: Other Incidents of Refugees Killed by GI's During Korean Retreat," *Associated Press*, 14 October 1999 [article on line]; available from <http://wire.ap.org/APpackages/nogunri/incidents.html>; Internet; accessed 2 November 2002. This article describes the demolition of both the Taksong-dong Bridge by the 14th Combat Engineers of the 24th Infantry Division, and the Waegwan Bridge by the 1st Cavalry Division. This article also discusses the killing of a group of eighty refugees on 2 August 1950. The refugees were trailing the 1st Cavalry Division as they withdrew towards the Naktong River. After discovering five North Korean soldiers among the refugees, soldiers received orders from officers to eliminate them. The writers did not include this incident in their book.

<sup>11</sup>Charles J Hanley, Sang-Hun Choe, and Martha Mendoza, *The Bridge at No Gun Ri* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001), 122.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 121-124.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 151-156.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 186-189.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 119-146; a similar description may also be found in Department of the Army Inspector General, *No Gun Ri Review* (Washington DC: Department of the Army, January 2001), i-ii.

<sup>16</sup>Joe Galloway, "Doubts About a Korean 'Massacre,'" *US News and World Report*, 22 May 2000, 40-52; Brian Duffy, "Memory and its Flaws," *US News and World Report*, 12 June 2000, 22; Ed Offley, "New Evidence Challenges No Gun Ri Massacre Charge," *Stars and Stripes*, 11 May 2000, 1.

<sup>17</sup>Robert L. Bateman, *No Gun Ri: A Military History of the Korean War Incident* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002), 130.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 118-119.

<sup>19</sup>T. R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War: The Classic Korean War History* 2d ed., (Washington: Brassey's, 1998), 31-32.

<sup>20</sup>“Taft Stand on McCarthy,” *New York Times*, 22 June 1950, 5.

<sup>21</sup>Stanley Weintraub, *MacArthur's War: Korea and the Undoing of An American Hero* (New York: The Free Press, 2000), 182. Senator McCarthy declared that the State Department employed over 205 members of the Communist Party.

<sup>22</sup>Bateman, 42.

<sup>23</sup>Hannon W. Baldwin, “Condition of the Army,” *New York Times*, 22 June 1950, 5. This article appeared three days before the North Korean attack on South Korea. The major points of this article addressed many of the readiness issues later discussed in books and articles about the lack of preparedness of the Army for the Korean War. The issues brought up in this article include: (1) the constant turnover of regimental commanders; (2) lack of unit ‘consciousness or esprit; (3) lack of good non-commissioned officers; (4) difficulty in eliminating the incompetent or unfit; (5) excessive overhead in nonessential units while combat units remained undermanned; (6) inadequate discipline; (7) reduced officer standards; (8) lack of adequate housing; and (9) scarcity of new equipment.

<sup>24</sup>Peter Karsten, *Law Soldiers and Combat* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), 55-59. Karsten refers to a report by Samuel A. Stouffer, *Studies in Social Psychology in World War II, Vol. II, The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949), 147-167. According to this report soldiers fighting the Japanese were six more time likely to “really like to kill” the enemy than soldiers who fought in Europe. Karsten draws the conclusion that soldiers in the Pacific were much less likely to follow the laws of war than those in Europe.

<sup>25</sup>Richard J. H. Johnston, “Guile Big Weapon of North Koreans: Enemy Still Using Refugees and G. I. Sympathy to Hide Sudden Blows at Lines,” *New York Times*, 27 July 1950, 1.

<sup>26</sup>John Mewha, *Enemy Tactics, Vol. III, Part 12: Enemy Tactics to include Guerrilla Methods and Activities, Infiltration Methods, and Countermeasures*, Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS (Eighth United States Army Korea, 16 December 1951), microfiche, 82-85. The Eighth Army Historical Service Detachment (Provisional) prepared this monograph based on information gathered from interviews and from official documents from the Far East Command, Eighth Army, and subordinate units. First Lieutenant John Mewha was the principal researcher and prepared the original draft of the manuscript.

## CHAPTER 2

### SETTING THE STAGE

The twenty-one ship convoy weighed anchor in typhoon like weather from Okinawa. After three rough days at sea they cut through the rough tides of Inchon on 8 September 1945. After the convoy dropped anchor, three neatly dressed men came out to greet the Americans claiming to be the representatives of the Korean government. Lieutenant General John Hodge, commander of the XXIVth Corps, did not trust these men. He met with them briefly, but refused to recognize them as the representatives of the Korean people and sent them on their way.<sup>1</sup> The convoy continued into the port and the soldiers of the 7th Division disembarked as the black-coated Japanese policemen, mounted on horses, held back the crowd. The atmosphere was tense. Earlier in the day the Japanese police killed two Koreans demonstrating in support of the American occupation.<sup>2</sup>

Hodge and his staff could not have been less prepared to take over the occupation of Korea south of the 38th Parallel. Just a few weeks earlier they were focused on the impending attack on the Japanese mainland. The rapid collapse of the Japanese government after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the rapid advance of Soviet forces through Manchuria and northern Korea changed the priorities. Planners with the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) feared the Soviets would take all of Korea before US troops could get on the ground, and planners proposed to the Soviets a partition along the 38th Parallel to accept the surrender of Japanese forces.<sup>3</sup> To everyone's surprise the Soviets accepted the plan, and MacArthur decided to send in

Hodge's XXIVth Corps, in Okinawa at the time, because it was the closest force to Korea.

Hodge received little guidance on establishing control in Korea, other than State Department instructions to "create a government in harmony with US policies."<sup>4</sup> No mention was made of what these policies were. His immediate superior, Tenth Army commander Lieutenant General Joseph Stillwell, told him to treat the people as semi-friendly since only about 5 percent of the people were Japanese collaborationists.<sup>5</sup> Being a practical military man, Hodge decided to attack the problem head on. He told his staff to consider the Koreans as enemies to the US and that the XXIVth Corps would treat them in accordance with the terms of the Japanese surrender.<sup>6</sup> Hodge also chose initially not to recognize any of the various political groups claiming the role as representatives of the Korean people. Instead he turned to the only stabilizing force he could find, the Japanese, to maintain control over the country. He believed he needed the Japanese to stay on until the military government could train the Koreans to take over the government themselves, and eventually received civil affairs units "trained" for the occupation. MacArthur had decided on a benevolent occupation in Japan and had determined that civil affairs units earmarked for the Japanese occupation were unnecessary. As a result, he sent these units to Korea, despite their lack of training in the Korean language, politics, economics, or culture. The Koreans ended up receiving the military occupation intended for Japan.<sup>7</sup>

Soon after their arrival, the Americans discovered that a de facto government led by the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI) had taken over many administrative functions from the Japanese, and the three men who met Hodge in

the Inchon harbor on 8 September were leading members of the CPKI. This organization, later renamed the Korean People's Republic (KPR), seemed to have the support of the majority of people in the American sector.<sup>8</sup> Most of the villages established People's Committees that maintained ties to the People's Republic. While these groups tended to lean towards the left politically, they were not all communists. Yo Un-hyong, the leading organizer of the KPR in Seoul, was actually a Christian who espoused both Wilsonian and socialist views.<sup>9</sup> The Americans failed to see from the start of the occupation that the driving forces behind Korean opposition to American policies were the desire for reunification and land reform at the village level.

Hodge's initial reliance on Japanese governmental structure was the first step in alienating the general population. During the next three months, Hodge and his staff continued to establish policies that further aggravated the Koreans and led to a resistance movement. Resistance graduated to guerrilla warfare that lasted up to the start of the Korean War. Quickly realizing the mistake of relying on the Japanese, MacArthur ordered Hodge to immediately remove them from administration of the government. By this time Hodge had also begun to understand the error of his policy and removed the Japanese from their administrative positions, but kept many on as advisors. Hodge initially tried to keep from recognizing any one particular political group in accordance with general American policy to only recognize legitimate governments in exile. Although various groups claimed legitimacy as the rightful Korean government, the US did not recognize any of these groups. However, Hodge soon started leaning towards the more conservative elements in Korean society. On 15 September, a week after the beginning of the occupation, Hodge's State Department political advisor, H. Merrell

Benninghoff, submitted a report to his superiors based on the intelligence summaries of the XXIVth Corps G2, Colonel Cecil Nist. This report stated:

Southern Korea can best be described as a powder keg ready to explode at the application of a spark.

There is great disappointment that immediate independence and sweeping out of the Japanese did not eventuate.

[Those Koreans who] achieved high rank under the Japanese are considered pro-Japanese and are hated almost as much as their masters. . . .

All groups seem to have the common idea of seizing Japanese property, ejecting the Japanese from Korea, and achieving immediate independence. Beyond this they have few ideas.

Korea is completely ripe for agitators. . . .

The most encouraging single factor in the political situation is the presence in Seoul of *several hundred conservatives* among the older and better-educated Koreans. Although many of them have served the Japanese, that stigma ought eventually to disappear. Such persons favor the return of the "Provisional Government" and although they may not constitute a majority they are probably the largest single group.<sup>10</sup>

The Americans clearly misunderstood the deep resentment that the average Korean felt towards the Japanese and those Koreans they considered as collaborators. The conservative elements that Benninghoff referred to were generally the better educated and wealthier members of society. However, these men grew rich by cooperating with the Japanese at a time when their rule became increasingly bitter for the common peasant. However, the men of the military government saw in this conservative group, outspoken anticommunists with whom they could work. These men manipulated American fear of communism to their political advantage, as the Americans had quickly changed their enemy from the Japanese to anyone that was communist. While Benninghoff wrote that the conservatives formed the largest single political group, that group was actually the KPR. The conservatives formed their own party called the Korean Democratic Party (KDP), but they knew they lacked legitimacy with the people so they

pushed for the return of Dr. Syngman Rhee from the US, and the Korean Provisional Government, led by Kim Koo, from China. Recognition of the conservatives and their elevation to the administration of the country further aggravated the populace. After a month of being ignored by the Americans, the KPR began to show open signs of opposition to the military government by distributing pamphlets and hanging posters throughout Seoul attacking American policies.<sup>11</sup>

Hodge added fuel to the fire of discontentment by retaining the Japanese national police system and by building a constabulary force that eventually turned into the ROKA (ROKA). Although he rid the National Police of Japanese officers, many Koreans who had served with the Japanese remained. Understandably, the people considered these men as collaborators and resented their continued authority. Hodge made no attempt to hide his contempt for the KPR and used the National Police, who continued to use brutal methods learned from the Japanese to quell opposition. Furthermore, on 10 November Hodge shut down a newspaper in Seoul sympathetic to the KPR for “accounting irregularities.”<sup>12</sup> Then, on the twenty-fifth he cabled MacArthur that he intended to publicly denounce them, saying “This will constitute in effect ‘a declaration of war’ upon the Communistic elements in Korea, and may result in temporary disorders.”<sup>13</sup> MacArthur told Hodge to do what he thought best.<sup>14</sup>

In January 1946 Hodge began the process of building an armed force separate from the police. Opposition by MacArthur and the State Department led him to call it a constabulary force and to limit the weapons and equipment to small arms. Hodge decided to build this force to relieve his troops of some of the burden of providing internal security, and ordered Brigadier General Arthur S. Champeny to develop the Constabulary

as a police reserve consisting of 25,000 men.<sup>15</sup> To help recruit officers, the Americans turned to Lee Hyung Koon, a former colonel in the Japanese army, and predictably, the officers he recommended also served in the Japanese army.<sup>16</sup> Lee went on to serve as the de facto Chief of Constabulary and later as the first ROKA Chief of Staff.<sup>17</sup>

In theory the Constabulary was a reserve to the police force during 1946 and 1947, but in practice the two did not get along and conflicts over jurisdiction arose. The politics of the Constabulary men were a bit more extreme than the conservative police force, and the two groups even fought a bloody battle in the southwest town of Yongnam in 1947. The military government mediated the differences and the Constabulary eventually gained more autonomy, and the Americans came to rely on it to suppress rebellion and fight against the growing guerrilla movement.<sup>18</sup> American advisors, with an eye towards building a Korean Army, saw civil disorders and counter guerrilla operations as a means to train the Constabulary force.<sup>19</sup>

The Koreans responded to these American policies with open rebellion in four provinces in the fall of 1946. After the suppression of the rebellion, radical elements developed a significant guerrilla movement in 1948 and 1949.<sup>20</sup> The most significant guerrilla activity started on Cheju Island and later spread to the mainland. Politically, the local leaders on Cheju supported the establishment of People's Committees in the villages. However, Rhee, who by now had consolidated political power over South Korea, appointed Yu Hae-jin, an extreme right winger from the mainland, to rule the island. Yu filled the police force on Cheju with ultraright wing extremists and brutally suppressed any political opposition. A United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) investigation later found that the police failed to win the hearts and minds



of the people, and a significant guerrilla movement formed even though most of the population were moderate leftists. According to Republic of Korea (ROK) authorities, by the end of 1948 they had fought over 100 battles against the rebels, killing 422 and holding another 6,000 in custody. Figures for 1949 include the destruction of 20,000 homes and between 20,000 and 30,000 deaths.<sup>21</sup>

In the midst of the Cheju campaign the greatest challenge to Rhee's fledgling government came from the rebellion of a constabulary regiment. On 19 October 1948, the 14th Regiment refused to embark from the southern port city of Yosu to participate in the suppression of the guerrillas on Cheju. Communists had infiltrated into the NCO corps of the regiment and fomented rebellion throughout the ranks. By the morning of the 20th they had control of Yosu, and then moved to take the nearby town of Sunch'on, which they seized in the early afternoon. They then restored the local people's committee, and people's courts moved to execute policemen and local rightists.<sup>22</sup> Rhee responded by placing Brigadier General Song Ho Seung, commander of the Constabulary, in command of all police and constabulary units to put down the uprising. The American Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) sent advisors to assist Seung.<sup>23</sup> Even though the American occupation had officially ended with the inauguration of Syngman Rhee as president on 15 August 1948, Rhee and Hodge agreed to continue to have advisors assist in the training of the Constabulary.<sup>24</sup> These KMAG advisors organized and helped direct the suppression of the rebellion in Yosu.<sup>25</sup> While KMAG and the Constabulary succeeded in defeating the rebels, many fled into the mountains of South Cholla Province, joining up with rebels and bandits already in the area. The guerrilla movement on the mainland dates to this period.<sup>26</sup> The remnants of these guerrillas would continue to operate up to

the start of the Korean War, playing a significant part on the battlefield by threatening the rear areas of United Nations (UN) forces. Activity near No Gun Ri in July 1950 indicates a guerrilla threat existed in the area when the 7th CAV arrived for their first taste of combat.

In November 1948, the South Korean government passed the ROK Armed Forces Organization Act. This act established a Department of National Defense to include an Army and a Navy with Brigadier General Lee Hyung Koon as the first chief of staff. The XXIVth Corps and later KMAG played a large role in the development of the ROKA. From the start of the Constabulary force, Hodge had an eye on building an army for South Korea. With full independence achieved in August 1948, the Koreans could move to make their army official. Concerns over their ability to put down insurrection and defend its borders against the emerging threat from North Korea led Rhee to request that the US leave troops in Korea until he could firmly establish control over the country. The Americans agreed to leave a Regimental Combat Team (RCT) in Korea while the rest of the XXIVth Corps left by 15 January for deactivation in Japan.<sup>27</sup> MacArthur withdrew the RCT in June, but KMAG remained behind to assist the fledgling Korean army. In building the Korean army, the Americans made a conscious decision not to provide equipment to give them an offensive capability. Rhee's fiery rhetoric led the Americans to believe that he would try to unify the country by force if given the opportunity. As the XXIVth Corps departed they left behind much of their equipment to include small arms, machine guns, mortars, and artillery. However, the US refused to give Rhee the tanks and attack aircraft that he wanted. As a result, when the North Koreans attacked on 25 June

1950, ROKA could not establish a credible defense against a Soviet trained and equipped force.

ROKA continued to conduct counter guerrilla operations after the XXIVth Corps departed, with KMAG providing advice and assistance in training. In addition to fighting guerrillas, ROKA began conducting operations along the 38th parallel against North Korea. Both the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) and ROKA instigated numerous skirmishes across the border, which continued throughout 1949 and 1950. By June 1950 ROKA had four divisions along the 38th parallel and another three further to the south conducting counter guerrilla operations. North of the border the NKPA had built a credible force with the assistance of the Soviet Union and China. American ambiguity over interests in the Far East led North Korean leader Kim Il Sung to believe that the Americans would not assist South Korea in the event of war. Kim convinced both Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong that he could seize all of Korea before the Americans could react. When his army attacked across the 38th parallel on 25 June 1950, it was probably one of the best armies in the world at the time.

By early July the NKPA showed just how powerful they were. Major General Lee Young Ho's 3rd Division spearheaded the attack on Seoul and advanced towards Taejon. He must have been pleased with the performance of his own division. He had successfully defeated all opposition in his path and his troops played a key role in the capture of Seoul.<sup>28</sup> The quality and the fighting spirit of his division and the rest of the Korean People's Army were a testament to the leadership of Kim Il Sung. He had skillfully lobbied for Premier Stalin to give them equipment and advisors to help build the army. He also was able to get Chairman Mao to release thousands of Korean soldiers

who had fought bravely with the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) against the Koumintang. The NKPA developed from the influence of these two masters, the Soviet Union and the CCF. Now this lethal and agile army that included both conventional and unconventional forces wreaked havoc on the South Koreans and had made the Americans flee at Osan.

The Soviet Union played a dominant role in the development of the NKPA much as the US helped build the South Korean Constabulary and later ROKA. Soviet development of the NKPA started with the decision to back Kim Il Sung. The details of this decision remain obscure. According to retired Colonel Grigory Mekler, Soviet generals in the Russian Far East received orders in April 1945 to find a suitable leader for a new Korean state.<sup>29</sup> Historian Bruce Cumings argues that communist guerrillas serving with the Soviet Red Army chose Kim to serve as leader due to his “wider reputation and personal force.”<sup>30</sup> Kim, who led a communist guerrilla band in Manchuria against the Japanese, fled with his group to Siberia due to successful Japanese counterinsurgency operations. At some point during this time Kim, whose real name was Kim Song-ju, took the name of Kim Jong Il, a legendary guerrilla leader. The Soviets detained Kim and what remained of his band, and then forced him into the Red Army. By the end of the war, Kim attained the rank of captain in the Soviet Army and commanded a battalion of the 88th Independent Sniper Brigade. Kim and his backers came to be known as the Kaspen faction.<sup>31</sup>

Regardless of how Kim attained the backing of the Soviets, the decision had a major impact on the development of the NKPA. The Russians brought him back to North Korea on 19 September 1945 on the warship *Pugachev* along with forty other members

of the 88th Special Independent Sniper Brigade. After their arrival, Kim sent these supporters to take leadership positions throughout the country and to serve as his eyes and ears. Many of his comrades would rise to high rank in the NKPA, where their experience and training in the Soviet methods of partisan warfare influenced their approach towards guerrilla warfare. As for Kim, he ingratiated himself with the Soviets and they installed him at the head of a provisional government as chairman of the People's Committee of North Korea in a ceremony in Pyongyang on 14 October 1945.<sup>32</sup> Initially, Kim did not have a wide base of support, but by the time the Democratic People's Republic of Korea replaced the People's Committee in 1948, he had brutally eliminated his opposition. Kim was probably not the puppet of the Soviets as often portrayed in books and the press. Instead, similar to Syngman Rhee in the south, Kim rose to power under the grooming of the Soviet Union, but once installed proved difficult to control.

Like Rhee, Kim sought the unification of Korea even if it meant war. He pushed Stalin for support to launch an invasion of the South as early as March 1949. According to Anatoli Turkunov, Rector of the Moscow Institute of International Studies, Stalin balked at the idea, believing Kim's force too small to successfully invade, and did not want to provoke the US who still had advisors in the south. However, in June 1949, Stalin agreed to provide heavy weapons for the new Korean Peoples Army in exchange for payment in foodstuffs. Kim refused to give up on his plans to invade the South, playing Mao and Stalin against each other for the next year to eventually get grudging approval from Stalin if Mao agreed to provide support in case of foreign intervention. Stalin may have changed his mind due to the changed situation brought about by the

communist victory over the Koumintang in China. For his part Mao had already agreed to return two of the three Korean divisions then in the Chinese army.<sup>33</sup> Up to that point, Kim's army was no threat to the south. However, the addition of these two divisions gave Kim a core of hardened fighters with combat experience from the Chinese Civil War. Meanwhile the Soviets had supplied Kim with T-34 tanks, howitzers, aircraft, and communications equipment, giving the NKPA the best-equipped army in Asia.<sup>34</sup> Colonel Wong Lichan, the second most senior member of the People's Republic of China's military attaché department marveled at the Korean's modern army, particularly their communications equipment. He would not admit to his North Korean hosts that their tiny army had far better equipment than the Chinese Communist Forces. Additionally, the Soviets provided advisors and wrote the operational plans down to battalion level. Shortly before the war began, the Soviets pulled these advisors out.<sup>35</sup>

The transfer of the Korean soldiers from the Chinese Communist Forces to North Korea also had a major impact on the development of the NKPA, since they brought with them many leaders and with extensive combat experience. The largest contingent of Koreans fighting with Mao's forces was the Korean Volunteer Army formed around a core of thirty men in 1939 under the command of Mu Chong in Yen'an. This group came to be known as the Yen'an faction, which, along with the organization of their army, started a school for training future military and political leaders for an independent Korea after the war. The Yen'an faction drew most of its members from Japanese deserters and boasted a membership of 2,500 by the end of the war when Mu tried to bring his force back to Korea. However, the Soviets would not allow the armed band into the country, but told Mu they could retain their arms if they returned to China and helped the

Communists defeat the Nationalists. Unwilling to disband, Mu returned to Manchuria and continued to strengthen his army. This arrangement not only allowed the Soviets to provide assistance to Mao's cause, but also prevented a well-trained, indoctrinated and disciplined force from entering Korea and challenging Kim Il Sung for power.<sup>36</sup> However, when North Korea formed the Korean Peace Preservation Corps in April 1946, many of the KVA leaders came back to Korea to take positions of authority along with Koreans from the Soviet Army.<sup>37</sup>

As stated earlier, China provided a core of hardened veterans of Korean nationalists who served in the Chinese Civil War, and several Korean units traced their history back to the Chinese Communist Forces. At the beginning of the NKPA buildup in 1948, China repatriated over 16,000 North Koreans from the CCF. In July 1949, the CCF transferred non-Koreans out of the 164th Division and filled its ranks with Korean replacements. The unit crossed into North Korea and became the North Korean 5th Division, and in the same month, the 166th Division became the 6th Division. Later, in April 1950, Korean veterans of the Chinese Manchurian Army returned to Korea and became the 7th Division. The 4th Division, one of the first divisions formed by the North Koreans in 1948, included a regiment of CCF veterans.<sup>38</sup> The 3rd Division, which would fight the US 7th Cavalry in Yongdong, included 700-800 CCF veterans.<sup>39</sup>

The Russian and Chinese origins of the NKPA resulted in two distinct approaches towards guerrilla and partisan warfare based upon the different experiences of the Yen'an and Kaspen factions. The Yen'an faction followed the theories of Mao, placing more importance on the political aspect of guerrilla warfare in accordance with Mao's teachings. According to Mao, guerrilla leaders should focus on winning the hearts of the

population, and only when the political situation is right should the guerrilla begin using direct military action. One of Kim Il Sung's chief rivals for power, Pak Hon-yong, pushed this thought during training at the Kangdong Political Institute, which he formed in 1947. Pak, a communist forced out of the south by the American occupation, formed the school to counterbalance Kim's Security Officer's Training Center. The attendees at this school were generally communists from the south and remained loyal to Pak. However, Pak and his school lost power and prestige after an unsuccessful attempt by 630 graduates to facilitate a popular uprising in the fall of 1949. As a result, the school folded in 1949 and Pak's political group joined with Kim's to form the Korean Worker's Party. Still Pak's school had a major impact on the conduct of guerrilla warfare before and during the war.<sup>40</sup> From November 1948 to March 1950, the North Koreans infiltrated several thousand guerrillas into South Korea, many educated at the Kangdong Political Institute. These northern sponsored guerrillas linked up with southern communists, concentrating in three major areas: the mountainous area north of T'aebaeksan to the 38th Parallel, the mountainous area east of T'aebaeksan to the coast, and the mountainous areas around Chiri-san on the border between South Cholla Province and South Kyongsang Province.<sup>41</sup> Guerrillas also operated in Taegu and Kyongju in the southeast part of the country.<sup>42</sup> The ROK government conducted an extensive and brutal campaign to stamp out the guerrilla movement in these areas, which seemed to at least keep it from growing. KMAC chief, Brigadier General W. L. Roberts later claimed that ROKA counterguerrilla activities resulted in the killing of 6,000 guerrillas breaking "the backbone of the guerrilla movement."<sup>43</sup> More crucial was probably the capture of



guerrilla leaders Kim Sam-yong and Yi Chu-ha, who played crucial roles in the organization of guerrilla forces.<sup>44</sup>

Remnants of these guerrilla forces continued to operate in South Korea at the start of the Korean War, even though their operations seemed to stop in March 1950. The 7th CAV would come into contact with some of these remnants within hours of debarking in Pohang on 22 July, when a sniper fired on soldiers unloading the ships at the dock. However, these indigenous guerrillas probably played no major role in the battle at No Gun Ri. The area around No Gun Ri and Yongdong was not a hotbed for guerrilla activity, although a few communist sympathizers probably lived in the area. The closest guerrilla areas were in Taegu and Chiri-san, both about 50 miles away.<sup>45</sup>

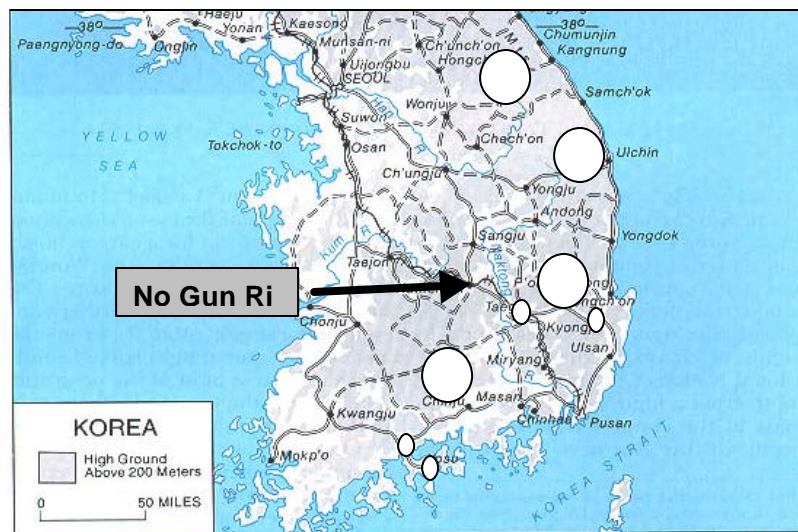


Figure 1. Areas of Extensive Prewar Guerrilla and Communist Activity. Source: Billy C. Mossman, *United States Army in the Korean War: Ebb and Flow*, November 1950–July 1951 (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, 1990), 6 [book on line]; available from [http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/korea/maps/map2\\_full.jpeg](http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/korea/maps/map2_full.jpeg); Internet; accessed on 4 April 2003. Modified to show guerrilla areas.

In contrast to the Yenan faction, the Kaspen faction approached guerrilla warfare based on the training and experience of the 88th Independent Special Sniper's Brigade in which Kim Il Sung was an officer. The Soviets trained the 88th in the tactics and techniques of Soviet partisan warfare, which placed less importance on politics and more on direct action and sabotage. Under Soviet tutelage, the leaders of the 88th learned the finer points of infiltration and sabotage of rear area facilities, such as railroads and communications. The scattering of members of the 88th throughout the government and military of North Korea had a lasting impact on the NKPA's approach to guerrilla warfare.<sup>46</sup>

In the end the NKPA used a combination of tactics and techniques based on the two competing factions. In general, guerrillas who infiltrated to the south before the war practiced the methods of Mao to encourage the local populace to rise up against the government of Syngman Rhee. While achieving limited success, they did serve to tie down three ROKA divisions in the southern part of the peninsula, pulling them away from the defense of the 38th Parallel. These guerrillas joined with Koreans in the south who also tended to follow this thought, focusing on agitation and political indoctrination as opposed to direct action. Once the war started, their main role was to act as guides for the NKPA and to establish control over their home region once they were liberated by the NKPA. Although they conducted direct action in rear areas, they generally avoided direct conflict with American front line units.<sup>47</sup>

The main forces of the KPA, however, embraced the Soviet style of partisan warfare. Each division included a guerrilla force of varying size to facilitate the division's attack. These guerrillas would at times don civilian clothes or ROKA uniforms to

infiltrate behind the front lines. Generally they moved at night along the ridge lines, but they would also blend in with refugee columns until they reached a rear area, where they would retrieve weapons hidden in bundles and ox carts before moving to their assigned targets. Missions for these forces included providing guides for infiltrating conventional forces, direct action against specific artillery or command and control sites, and the establishment of road blocks to cut off and destroy retreating forces.<sup>48</sup> These unconventional tactics fall along the same lines as American Special Forces or Ranger tactics, with the exception of donning civilian clothes and the opposing force's uniforms.

The North Koreans used these tactics with great success during the opening weeks of the war. By the first week of July, they had captured Seoul and put American soldiers to flight at Osan and Pyongtaek. Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, commander of the Eighth United States Army flew into Taejon on 8 July for his second trip to Korea in as many days. Major General William Dean, commander of the 24th Infantry Division and all other troops on the ground in Korea, met Walker at the airfield and escorted him to a hill south of Ch'onan. The battle raged in the city below as the generals spread a map across the hood of a jeep. While they discussed plans for future operations, an officer from 3rd Battalion, 34th Infantry interrupted to tell them that the North Koreans had broken through the defenses in the town with armor. The American defense disintegrated, and soldiers were "bugging out," a term coming into fashion with American troops meaning they were withdrawing. In this case the force was unorganized. To make matters worse, Colonel Robert Martin, the new regimental commander, was cut in two by a tank round when he tried to destroy the tank with a bazooka. Dean tried to get control of the situation and ordered the 34th to take up positions further to the south.<sup>49</sup>

Just then, the division tank company that Dean had ordered forward earlier in the day arrived at the hill. Walker stopped the lieutenant from the lead platoon as he came up the hill.

“What are you going to do down there?” he asked.

“I’m going to slug it out,” said the lieutenant, clenching his teeth.

Walker said calmly, “Now, our idea is to stop those people. We don’t go up there and charge and slug it out. We take positions where we have the advantage, where we can fire the first shots and still manage a delaying action.”<sup>50</sup>

General Walker was not pleased. His visit to the front confirmed what he already knew--his forces were not prepared for this fight. Since he had taken command of the Eighth Army the previous summer he had worked hard to reverse the apathy towards training built over four years of occupation duty in Japan. Additionally, a multitude of challenges plagued the Eighth Army, to include manpower and equipment shortages, lack of spare parts, inadequate training, and poor leadership. These issues combined to create a force that lacked cohesion and the will to fight against a tough, determined enemy. Just five short years earlier the United States Army was a well-trained machine, with the best equipment, troops and leaders the nation could provide. The force Walker brought to war was simply a hollow shell of the past. Many factors contributed to the army falling to this low level of readiness to include the rapid pace of demobilization, budget constraints, lack of training areas, personnel problems, and the ongoing requirements of occupation duty.

After the victory in World War II, President Harry Truman believed that getting the economy back on a peacetime footing was essential for the security and welfare of the country. He slashed defense spending, fearing that continued spending on wartime

defense contracts would keep the economy focused on an artificial base no longer needed. Truman's first act of fiscal belt tightening came when he reduced the initial \$70 billion 1946 defense budget by \$28.7 billion. Then, starting with the 1947 budget, Truman would allocate no more than one third of estimated government income to defense. However, this was only a ceiling. All other government agencies received their funding before the military, which got what was left over, no matter what the requirements were. For the army this meant a paltry \$7.26 billion budget in 1947.<sup>51</sup> The budget continued to fall in succeeding years with allocations of \$5.96 billion in 1948 and \$4.35 billion in 1949.<sup>52</sup> The Joint Chiefs submitted a budget for 1950, accounting for the costs of continuing occupation missions, maintenance of the force, and training, which amounted to \$30 billion. Secretary Louis Johnson, trying to follow the President's guidance to minimize military spending cut the request down to \$16.9 billion. The Bureau of Budget reduced it another \$2.4 billion before sending it to Congress, who approved expenditures of \$13.2 billion on the military for 1950. Of this amount, the army received just \$4.4 billion.<sup>53</sup>

President Truman truly believed that sound economic policy was essential for national security. Although the administration saw the threat of Soviet expansion as the biggest danger to the US, Truman sought to counter this threat by providing foreign aid through programs such as the Marshall Plan, and by providing military aid to those nations willing to resist communist insurgencies.<sup>54</sup> Yet, the Department of Defense, faced with a dwindling budget, still needed to build an effective deterrent at the cheapest cost in terms of money and manpower. Believing the atomic bomb had made conventional warfare obsolete, they chose to focus on the continued development of long- range

bombers and atomic stockpiles, thus the Air Force became the primary arm for the deterrence of communist aggression. Truman codified this approach by endorsing NSC 30, which called for a bombing campaign against the Soviet Union in the event of war.<sup>55</sup>

The impact of this approach was devastating for the army. Cuts in money and the public's desire to bring men home from World War II meant the army shrunk from nearly one hundred divisions at the end of the war to just ten before the Korean War.<sup>56</sup> Each of these divisions lacked the personnel needed to man it at full strength, and the lack of money meant the army could not field new equipment. Furthermore, units did not have enough money for spare parts to keep the equipment they did have running. All of these factors combined inhibited the ability of the army to train for war.

The rapid drawdown caused a significant amount of turbulence within the ranks. Most of the seasoned veterans who fought in Europe and the Pacific eagerly left the service to take advantage of the GI Bill and return to a life outside the military. The necessary deactivation and moving of units and personnel caused an annual turnover rate of 43 percent from 1945 to 1949.<sup>57</sup> The rate continued to increase in 1950.<sup>58</sup> The army continued to bring in recruits with the GI Bill for a short time, but the program ended in October 1946. The end of this program left little incentive for a young man to enter the service, especially with an economy on the rise. As a result, the quality of recruits hit rock bottom. A September 1950 survey determined that 43 percent of soldiers in the army scored in the lowest mental categories (CAT), CAT 4 and CAT 5, on the Army General Qualification Test.<sup>59</sup> The army, desperate to fill the ranks, let them in.

Personnel policies in relation to officers also hurt the force. Despite the steep reduction in manpower after World War II, the post-war army was still much larger than

the army before the war. The army found itself in need of more Regular Army officers to stay in the force. To achieve this goal, the army instituted the Competitive Tour Program to allow officers commissioned through ROTC and OCS to obtain a Regular Army commission. Under this program, officers would fill key positions for twelve-week periods before going on to another position. This requirement also meant that Regular Army officers had to move to other positions to give training opportunities to the ROTC and OCS officers. This policy inhibited the ability to form cohesion at the levels needed most in infantry platoons and squads.<sup>60</sup>

Policies towards more senior officers also impacted on readiness. Rather than ensuring the best officers went to combat units, the top-heavy staff retained many of these officers. Far East command would get the records of officers coming from the states and take their pick of the lot. Those not selected were considered “Reject Ones” and sent to the Eighth Army. There the Eighth Army staff got its pick with the rejects to division now considered “Reject Two’s.” Those not selected by the division staff were finally sent to regiment and below and were “Reject Three’s.”<sup>61</sup> As a result, many officers, some superannuated, with no combat experience filled command positions. The opening days of the Korean War saw many of these officers relieved of their commands.

Demobilization and budget policies also meant a shortage of personnel. These shortages forced Eighth Army to deactivate several units. Eleven of twelve infantry regiments stationed in Japan had only two of their authorized three infantry battalions. Artillery battalions only had only two of three authorized firing batteries. Finally, each division was severely short on tanks. None of the infantry regiments had their authorized tank companies, and divisions had only one tank company instead of the authorized tank

battalion. Spending and personnel cuts meant that each division fielded only one tank company out of six authorized.<sup>62</sup>

General Dean discussed the challenges that this feeble force structure had on the ability of his regiments to fight. Without a third rifle battalion, regiments could not form a credible reserve and fight in accordance with tactical doctrine. Walker understood Dean's dilemma, and described to him a technique he learned in World War II when he often fought with insufficient reserves. He advised Dean to build strong points in depth, using integrated firepower to cover the gaps between them. He emphasized "Under such conditions, it is imperative that units not become decisively engaged."<sup>63</sup> Commanders had to take care in assigning missions, selecting terrain to fight from, and plan and rehearse withdrawal routes and issuing withdrawal orders.<sup>64</sup>

While Walker and Dean discussed tactics on the hill south of Ch'onan, the soldiers of the 7th Cavalry in Japan prepared to go to war. The regiment had lived through the challenges of demobilization and occupation of 1945-1950. Upon arriving in Japan in 1945, the 7th CAV's first mission was to take control of central Tokyo, then to locate and investigate their assigned area of operations for facilities of potential war-making capability, such as factories and arsenals. The regiment also assisted in the demobilization of the Japanese military, the guarding of key locations, and security for MacArthur's headquarters. The focus on occupation duties left little time for training. Throughout this period the strength of the regiment declined as individual soldiers rotated home. The few replacements they received generally did not get adequate training upon entry into the army. Cuts in funding meant that the training base in the US took severe cuts. As a result soldiers arrived in units not even trained to do the basics of their job. The



1st Cavalry Division, like other occupying division's, had to establish their own schools and training programs to get these soldiers up to basic standards. This requirement took even more soldiers, usually noncommissioned officers (NCOs), away from line units.<sup>65</sup>

Funding cuts also impacted on the readiness of the unit's equipment. The regiment was short on key pieces of equipment such as recoilless rifles and radios. The Eighth Army as a whole had just 21 of its authorized 226 recoilless rifles. Shortages in spare parts affected the availability of mortars and crew served weapons, as well as small arms. Maintaining proficiency on weapons and equipment was extremely difficult without the equipment on hand.<sup>66</sup>

The regiment finally saw a shift in the focus towards training in the summer of 1949. By this time the Japanese police had taken over most of the internal security duties freeing up the combat troops for training. Walker's staff developed a comprehensive training strategy based on an incremental approach from company to division level to be completed by December 1950. According to this plan, divisions were to complete company level training by December 1949, battalion training by May 1950, regimental training by July 1950, and division training by December 1950. Additionally, each division was to have a battalion trained in amphibious landings, and also integrate air support with regimental and division level exercises.

The plan was good--on paper. However, the plan did not take into account the training challenges faced by the units. With personnel turbulence still above 43 percent units continuously had to train the new replacements coming in to the units. Also, despite the Japanese taking over many of the tasks from the occupying force, the demands of occupation still drained manpower away from training. Furthermore, leaders did not seem

to put as much emphasis on training as they did on unit athletics. Several lieutenants from the championship West Point teams of 1945 and 1946 arrived in Korea to learn they would spend most of their time playing football instead of leading platoons. Unit athletics, unnecessary taskings, and the legitimate requirements of an occupation force whittled away at the number of soldiers available for training sometimes as low as 50 percent, crippling the ability to conduct effective collective training.<sup>67</sup> Walker's training plan also failed to take into account the lack of training areas available to his command. While most units could conduct squad, platoon and some level of company collective training near their bases, Eighth Army had only one training area available for battalion or higher collective training. Eighth Army simply could not provide units the enough time to adequately train with only one major training area. By the summer of 1950 few units had graduated beyond battalion-level training.<sup>68</sup>

When the North Koreans crossed the 38th Parallel, the 7th CAV had just completed platoon firing tests at the Mount Fuji training area. The regiment had not yet conducted the battalion or regimental training phases and only a few companies had completed their required training. The regiment consisted of only two infantry battalions, a two-battery artillery battalion and did not have its authorized tank company. The regiment also had a 20 percent shortage of personnel. On 27 June, the division ordered them to provide 166 soldiers to include 71 NCOs, to fill out the ranks of the 24th Division.<sup>69</sup> This meant that men with less than two years of army experience would fill in the vital positions of squad leader and platoon sergeant. On 8 July the regiment received orders to conduct amphibious operations in Korea. The regimental commander, Colonel Cecil Nist, the same Colonel who served as G2 for General Hodge and the XXIVth

Corps, was returning to Korea.<sup>70</sup> Nist, who had played a major role in the mistakes made during the occupation, returned to Korea as the commander of a regiment that epitomized the mistakes in training and readiness that plagued the US Army of 1950.

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<sup>1</sup>Max Hastings, *The Korean War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 28.

<sup>2</sup>Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997), 189.

<sup>3</sup>Bruce Cumings, *The Origin of the Korean War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 105. John J. McCloy, a member of the committee, instructed Army colonels Dean Rusk and Charles H. Bonesteel to find a place to divide the Korean Peninsula on the night of 10-11 August 1945. With only thirty minutes and using a small-scale map of the Far East, Rusk and Bonesteel decided on the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel because it roughly divided the country in half and left the capital, Seoul, in the American sector.

<sup>4</sup>Hastings, 28.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>7</sup>E. Grant Meade, *American Military Government in Korea* (New York: Kings Crown Press, 1951), 50-51. Meade was a civil affairs officer with the American Military Government. Civil affairs planners formed over forty companies to supervise the administration of each province in Japan. Nothing along this line was prepared for Korea. These teams arrived in Korea well after Hodge established administrative policies. By the time the military government teams arrived in Korea they had to accept the policies already established.

<sup>8</sup>Meade, 8; Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 185. The American sector consisted of all of Korea south of the 38th Parallel in accordance with the agreement made with the Soviet Union.

<sup>9</sup>Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 191.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>11</sup>Meade, 61.

<sup>12</sup>Hastings, 35.

<sup>13</sup>US National Archive, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945, 6: 1133-34, as quoted in Hastings, 35.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Robert K. Sawyer, *Military Advisor's In Korea: KMAG in Peace and War* (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, 1962), 13.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 26.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>20</sup>Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 192.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 219-220.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 221.

<sup>23</sup>Sawyer, 39.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>25</sup>Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 222.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 243.

<sup>27</sup>Sawyer, 37.

<sup>28</sup>Department of the Army G-2, "North Korean Order of Battle" (Washington, DC: Department of the Army 1 September 1950), 9.

<sup>29</sup>Dolgozhitel, "Soviets Groomed Kim Il Sung for Leadership," *Vladivostock News*, 10 January 2003 [newspaper on-line]; available from <http://vlad.tribnet.com/News/upd10.HTM>; Internet; accessed on 18 January 2003.

<sup>30</sup>Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun* 195.

<sup>31</sup>Joseph S. Bermudez, *North Korean Special Forces* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998), 16-18.

<sup>32</sup>Bermudez, 17-18; Republic of Korea National Intelligence Service, "The Peoples Army in the Making," January 1999 [report on-line]; available from

<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/rok/nis-docs/defense02.htm>; Internet; accessed on 19 January 2003; and "The Founding of the Korean People's Army," *Korea Web Weekly* [article on-line]; available from <http://www.kimsoft.com/2002/kpa-1946.htm>; Internet; accessed on 19 January 2003.

<sup>33</sup>Antoli Torkunov "Stalin, Kim Il Sung, and the 38th Parallel," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 5 August 1995, 7 [newspaper on-line]; <http://www.kwp.org/html/kdata/zveda.htm>; Internet; accessed on 18 January 2003; Roy Appleman, *United States Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1970), 9; Russell Spurr, *Enter the Dragon: China's Undeclared War Against the US in Korea, 1950-51* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1988), 17-18.

<sup>34</sup>Appleman, 11-12.

<sup>35</sup>Spurr, 17-19.

<sup>36</sup>Bermudez, 14.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>38</sup>Appleman, 9-10.

<sup>39</sup>Department of the Army G2.

<sup>40</sup>Bermudez, 20.

<sup>41</sup>Allen R. Millet, "Understanding is Better Than Remembering: the Korean War, 1945-1954," *The Dwight D. Eisenhower Lectures in War & Peace* (Manhattan, KS: Department of History, Kansas State University), 1995 [lecture on-line]; available from <http://www.ksu.edu/history/specialevents/Eisenhowerlecture/eisenhower7.htm>; accessed on 18 January 2003; Bermudez, 28.

<sup>42</sup>Cummings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 244.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>44</sup>Bermudez, 26.

<sup>45</sup>Bateman came to a different conclusion, which makes up a major part of his argument in *No Gun Ri: A Military History of the Korean War Incident*. Bateman offers little proof that No Gun Ri was the middle guerrilla activity other than admissions by some villagers of guerrilla and communist sympathies in the AP book. However, the area was not a "guerrilla stronghold" as he claims. Although he is correct in saying that Yongdong was in the geographic center of guerrilla activity, that activity followed the

mountain ranges to curve around the Yongdong area. None of the sources I have found refer to any strongholds closer than Chiri-san, or notable activity closer than Taegu.

<sup>46</sup>Bermudez, 18-21.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Mewha, 15-16 and 82-85; Bermudez, 33-34.

<sup>49</sup>Toland, 88.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 88.

<sup>51</sup>Paul Cook, "How Did a Lack of Strategic and Operational Vision Impair the Army's Ability to Conduct Tactical Operations in Korea in the Summer of 1950?" (Masters Thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 2002), 27.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 31-32.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 47.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 7, 28.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 49.

<sup>58</sup>Uzal W. Ent, *Fighting on the Brink: Defense of the Pusan Perimeter* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 1996), 10.

<sup>59</sup>Cook, 59-60.

<sup>60</sup>Lieutenant Carl Bernard, a platoon leader for Task Force Smith met his platoon on the way to Korea. Sent to the airfield to help the battalion load out, Lieutenant Colonel Smith grabbed him saying he had a job for him. This was Bernard's fourth platoon in eight months. (E-mail from Colonel ( R ) Carl Bernard).

<sup>61</sup>Stanley Weintraub, *MacArthur's War: Korea and the Undoing of An American Hero* (New York: The Free Press), 12.

<sup>62</sup>Ent, 10.

<sup>63</sup>John Toland, *In Mortal Combat: Korea, 1950-1953* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.), 89.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>65</sup>Ent, 10.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid*; Bateman, 35.

<sup>68</sup>Ent, 10. Toland, 91.

<sup>69</sup>Headquarters, 7th Cavalry, Special Order Number 140, 1 July 1950, RG 407, Box 4431, National Archives, College Park, MD. The 7th CAV War Diary states that the 7th CAV gave up 168 NCOs to the 24th ID, but these orders list the names of all soldiers transferred to the 24th ID. The list only gives the names of 166 soldiers instead of the 168 quoted in most sources. Subsequent publications that relate to the 7th CAV all give the number of 168 NCOs.

<sup>70</sup>7th Cavalry War Diary, entry for July 1950, RG 407, Box 4431, National Archives, College Park, MD.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE ROAD TO NO GUN RI

As evening fell on 22 July, the troopers of the 7th CAV walked down the gangplank to dry land for the first time in four days. Tossed about by stormy seas caused by Typhoons Gracie and Flossie, the men were happy to get off the transport ships, but at the same time apprehensive about what lay ahead. As they marched through Pohang toward their bivouac site six miles out of town, the men got their first taste of Korea, and most were shocked at what they saw. The regiment's war diary reflects their attitude as they moved through Pohang. "Upon passing through the poverty stricken town of Pohang-Dong the men were convinced that venereal [*sic*] diseases were as common as the common cold. Many realized that Japan was clean in comparison to this so called Korea."<sup>1</sup> As the men haphazardly dug hasty fighting positions and laid down for the night Colonel Nist and his S3, Major William Witherspoon left for a meeting with General Allen, the 1st Cavalry Division's assistant division commander, to receive their first mission. General Allen confirmed previous instructions for 1st Battalion to assume the defense of Pohang to the north along the coastal road, while the remainder of the regiment was to proceed towards Kumchon where the division was establishing defensive positions near a small town called Yong-dong. During the night, the regiment got its first indications of the complexity of the Korean battlefield that would plague them during the coming days. First, a runner from a security outpost requested an interpreter to communicate with 11 civilians detained by one of the soldiers on the security perimeter.



Meanwhile at 0400 soldiers detailed to the Regimental S4 to unload vehicles from the ship came under sniper fire.<sup>2</sup>

Nist and Witherspoon organized the move to Kumchon into three serials, two going by truck, and one by rail. The first serial, consisting of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance (I&R) platoon and key members of the regimental staff, departed at 1030 and arrived at the division command post 1700 that evening. Major Lucien Croft, the regimental S4 took charge of the 2nd serial, which left by truck at 1100, but took until 0005 on the 24th to arrive in the Kumchon sector. The main body led by Lieutenant Colonel Heyer, commander of the 2nd Battalion, was to depart Pohang by rail at 1300 hours, but due to a shortage in rail transportation, did not leave until 1830 hours. While Heyer and the main body moved forward, Nist established his command post two and a half miles behind the front lines occupied by the 5th and 8th Cavalry Regiments. As he waited for the 2nd Battalion to arrive, Nist received orders to establish a reverse force of two provisional companies out of the regimental headquarters company and other elements that had already arrived. Their mission was to react to a potential breakthrough of the front lines. Nist vehemently objected to this order going so far as to send a memorandum to the division commander in protest. He argued that if he employed this provisional force, he would no longer have a headquarters company and that he would cripple the 2nd Battalion since he was forced to strip their motor section of “drivers, machine guns, recoilless rifles and ammunition in forming the provisional force.”<sup>3</sup> The arrival of the 2nd Battalion at 1420 hours solved the issue, but the incident shows that Nist did not yet fully appreciate the fluidity of the battle and the necessity to remain flexible.<sup>4</sup>

As Nist assembled his force east of Yongdong, Major General Lee Young Ho's North Korean 3rd Division began to probe the initial defenses of the 1st CAV west of the town. After successfully seizing Taejon on 20 July, Lee gave his men two days to reorganize and refit before pushing on to their next objective, Yongdong, a key crossroads on the road to Taegu. Lee planned to use the same tactics that had worked so well against the American 24th Division against his new adversary, the 1st Cavalry Division. Lee had several advantages. After a month of combat even the newest recruits had become seasoned battlefield veterans. He also still had a strong corps of soldiers and officers who had fought with Mao's CCF against the Nationalists in China. Augmenting his force were tanks from the 105th Armored Division, which had proved valuable in maintaining pressure on the American main defenses, allowing his infantry to gain the flank and rear.<sup>5</sup> Finally, he could also count on the assistance of local sympathizers to help guide his own guerilla units and to gain information on the disposition of the American forces. These indigenous guerrillas moved freely through the countryside with their knowledge of the terrain, and could easily blend into the growing refugee columns.<sup>6</sup> Although communication was difficult, the North Koreans secretly sent passwords to local sympathizers to aid in making contact. They could identify other agents by the color of their buttons or the thread used to sew them on.<sup>7</sup> To ensure the loyalty of spies and informants the North Koreans held families of their agents hostage until completion of the mission.<sup>8</sup> Huge refugee columns also served a useful purpose in allowing guerrillas assigned to the division to infiltrate American lines. His men could easily blend in with these large crowds, hiding weapons and equipment in A-frames and oxcarts. This

technique had proven valuable in conducting reconnaissance on the enemy's forward positions and then further to the rear to pinpoint command posts and artillery locations.<sup>9</sup>

Lee knew he had to press his men to continue the offensive before the Americans could bring more divisions into Korea. Already his division had seen the effects of American firepower. Before Lee's troops had driven them out of Taejon, the 24th Division had knocked out a number of his T-34 tanks using the new 3.5-inch rocket, and American artillery and aircraft had also taken a heavy toll.<sup>10</sup> Lee's support units in the rear could only move at night, which greatly impacted on the supplies that reached the front lines.

Lee's reconnaissance elements reported that the Americans had established two strong points to the west of Yongdong, one along the Taejon-Yongdong highway heading northwest out of town, and the other to the southwest along the Yongdong-Muju highway. He ordered his 7th and 8th Regiments to attack these strong points in a coordinated attack on the evening of 23 July. Meanwhile, one of his guerrilla units had already successfully bypassed the enemy defense and was prepared to close the southwest road to cut off the enemy battalion in the south. The Americans established their strong points far apart, prohibiting mutual support and providing easy routes to infiltrate into their rear. The attack initially went well. The Americans seemed caught off guard by attacks on the flank and rear while tanks supported with infantry attacked from the front.<sup>11</sup> Refugees assisted by screening the movement of their attack. At a key bridge the Americans held their fire as refugees swarmed across. Even as tanks broke out of cover and stormed through the crowd and infantry among the civilians opened fire, the Americans failed to blow up the bridge, although they had rigged it with demolitions.<sup>12</sup> In

the north Lee's men easily bypassed the battalion and attacked on the left and right flanks while also pressing from the front. In the south, the guerilla unit cut the road supporting the southern battalion at around 1000 hours. The Americans tried to break this roadblock all day with attacks from the cut off battalion and from the 5th CAV, supported with tanks, attacking from Yongdong. To increase the pressure on the Americans, Lee's guerrillas entered Yongdong as early as 0800 hours and also attacked two battalions of artillery around noon.<sup>13</sup>

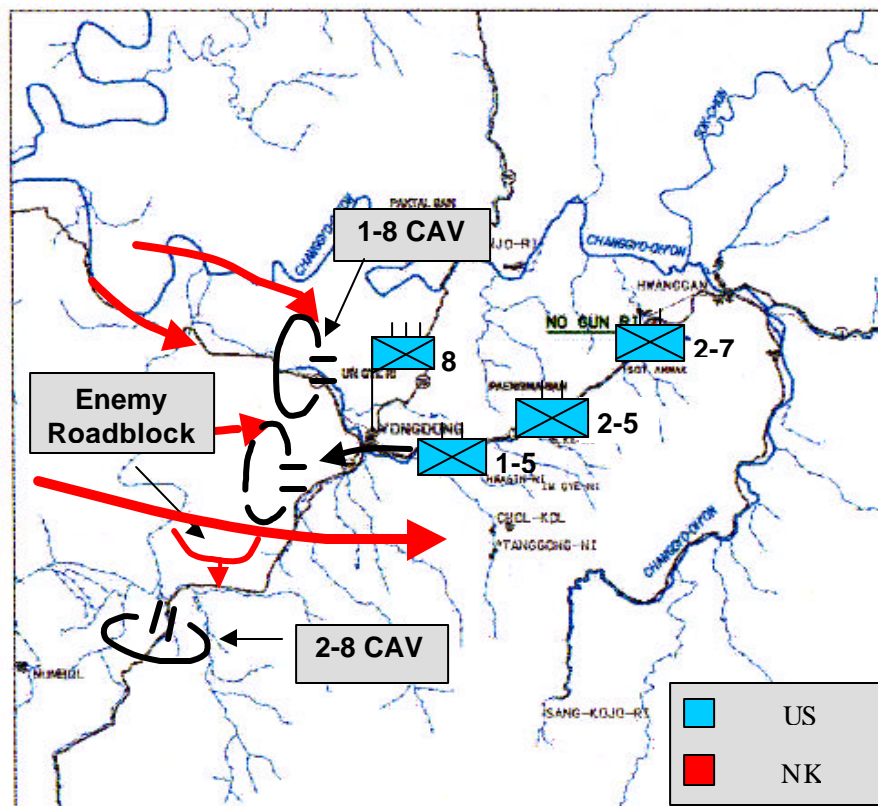


Figure 2. Situation 24 July, Defense of Yongdong. (Source: Department of the Army Inspector General, *No Gun Ri Review*, January 2001. Modified to show unit dispositions and North Korean attacks.)

From the American point of view the fight looked desperate. The North Koreans pressed both battalions of the 8th CAV, with 1st Battalion defending in the north and 2nd Battalion defending in the south. 1st Battalion seemed to hold its own, but the North Korean roadblock threatened to cut off the 2nd Battalion. In addition to the NKPA, the 8th CAV had to deal with the thousands of refugees streaming south on the roads and gathering in Yongdong. To assist in this effort the Division G4 pushed three trains containing 6,000 refugees out of Yongdong on 23 July.<sup>14</sup> By 1000 hours on the 24th the battle raged around the 8th CAV, and the threat of NKPA penetration by using civilians as shields prompted Gay to authorize the 8th CAV to fire on refugees in order to hold the line. The regimental war diary records the division LNO relaying the instructions to the regiment. "No refugees to cross the front line. Fire everyone trying to cross lines. Use discretion in case of women and children."<sup>15</sup> Also on this day, Gay published the division's first policy on the handling of refugees and civilians in the division area.

According to the policy:

- (a) No school, shops or industries will be operated except those essential to the war effort.
- (b) Movement will be permitted daily from 1000 to 1200 hours.
- (c) No ox-carts, trucks or civilian cars will be allowed to operate on highways.
- (d) No fields will be worked.
- (e) Municipal authorities, local police, and National Police will enforce this directive.
- (f) Arm bands will be worn by essential personnel such as municipal authorities, local police, doctors, mid wives, railroad and telephone personnel.<sup>16</sup>

Gay's policy was actually more lenient than that of the South Korean Government. The Korean policy also contained the two-hour movement window along with other instructions, but the ROK policy also stated that "All those

violating these regulations will be considered enemies and will be executed immediately.”<sup>17</sup>

To prevent the 8th CAV from getting cut off west of Yongdong, General Gay ordered the 5th CAV to attack with 2nd Battalion to break the North Korean roadblock while the 1st Battalion established defensive positions in the center to prevent the NKPA 3rd Division from breaking through the gap. The fighting continued throughout the night. Finally, at 0400 hours on the 25th, 2-8 CAV managed to punch a hole through the roadblock. However, North Korean forces cut off F Company (reinforced with 11 tanks) as the battalion pulled back. Four tanks eventually broke through, but the infantry and tank crews who lost their vehicles would spend the next two days trying to make it back to friendly lines. The division established new defensive positions to the east of Yongdong with 2-8 CAV and 2-5 CAV defending about half way between Yongdong and Hwanggan. 2-8 defended on the north side of the road, while 2-5 CAV defended on their left south of the road.<sup>18</sup> During the withdrawal, F Company, 5th CAV also got cut off as it wandered to the wrong hill while trying to assist in the withdrawal of the 8th CAV. The regiment lost contact with the company at 1140, and by the time they reestablished communication an hour later, the North Koreans had severely cut F Company up. 5th CAV spent the rest of the day trying to pull out F Company and gathering ambulances and trucks to take care of the wounded. In the end, only twenty-six men returned.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile Colonel Nist received orders for the 7th CAV to move forward to relieve pressure on the hard pressed 5th and 8th CAV. The 2nd Battalion moved forward to the front at 1850 hours, establishing a position along the main road.<sup>20</sup>

The events of that evening remain shrouded in the fog of battle as units moved forward and backward, intermixed with the ever-present swarm of refugees. Understanding the events of that night requires a close examination of the disposition of the 1st Cavalry Division. The 7th CAV occupied positions tied into 2-8 CAV about 1200 yards north-northeast of the village of Ka-Ri along the road between Yongdong and Hwanggan. By this time 1-8 CAV had moved further to the east, establishing an assembly area in the division rear near Hwanggan.<sup>21</sup> Both battalions of the 5th CAV were also forward with 2-5 CAV about 1100 yards southeast of 2-8 CAV and 1-5 CAV about two thousand yards northeast of the lead battalions.<sup>22</sup> Although the 7th CAV did not record the location of 2nd Battalion, it was probably either on line with 2-8 and 2-5 CAV or slightly to the east. Col Nist went forward to coordinate with the 8th CAV in the afternoon leaving instructions for 2-7 CAV to come forward if he did not return.<sup>23</sup> He later reported the position of his command post as across the road from 2-8 CAV and 2nd Battalion later reported that they were tied in to that battalion. Nist's headquarters was likely within the perimeter of the 2nd Battalion in accordance with guidance he gave before moving forward. Division Order 10.1, which addressed the withdrawal of units from Yongdong, includes an overlay that shows the disposition of units as described above. The only exception to this was the planned location for the 7th CAV, which was much further to the northeast in the vicinity of No Gun Ri.<sup>24</sup> Sometime after publishing this order, the division leadership decided to move the 7th CAV forward to relieve some of the pressure off 2-5 and 2-8 CAV.

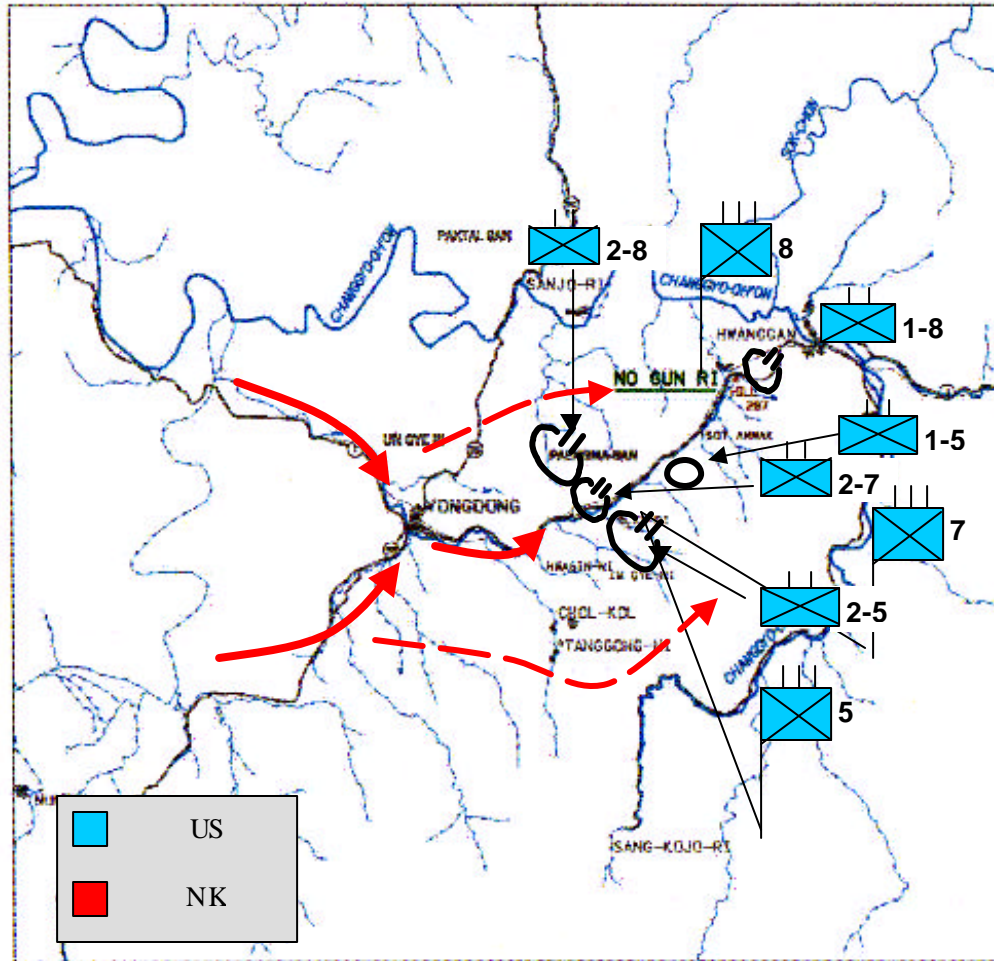


Figure 3. NKPA 3d Division Attack 25-26 July 1950. (Source: Department of the Army Inspector General, *No Gun Ri Review*, January 2001. Modified to show unit dispositions and North Korean attacks.)

As daylight faded 2-7 occupied a linear defense with the three line companies, E, F, and G deployed on the forward slope of a hill astride the road and railroad. Captain Melbourne Chandler's H Company, the battalion's weapons company, deployed to support the infantry with mortars to the rear and machine guns with the rifle companies.



However, Chandler focused the guns on the roadway and established his company headquarters beside the road.<sup>25</sup> The 7th CAV positions remained quiet until just after midnight. At 0035, Division called to have Major Witherspoon report to the division command post immediately for a meeting for all regimental S3s. At 0100 the NKPA 3rd Division launched a small-scale night attack against the forward positions of the division. Again, the North Koreans launched this attack by herding refugees in front of them followed by four tanks and infantry.<sup>26</sup> At 0120, Lieutenant Colonel Heyer, commander of the 2nd Battalion reported that refugees clogged the road and he believed a tank had passed his location.<sup>27</sup> Since no other units reported a tank in the rear area, this was either a tank that had been forward supporting either the 8th or 5th CAV or some other vehicle, not an NKPA tank.<sup>28</sup> Ten minutes later Witherspoon called from the division command post (CP). The division had held a conference on the planned withdrawal to the next positions in the vicinity of No Gun Ri. Witherspoon ordered the regimental CP to “alert all personnel for evacuation of their respective positions. A serious breakthrough had occurred in the sector to the right of the division.”<sup>29</sup> The unit in this sector was the 27th Regiment of the 25th Division, which reported that the enemy had bypassed their positions and they had pulled back to reestablish their defensive line.<sup>30</sup>

The combination of these events with the inexperience of the soldiers and leaders, lack of training, and loss of key NCOs led to a panic within the 7th Cavalry. According to the War Diary “It was decided to withdraw all elements of the regiment in sequence, with the exception of the besieged 2nd Battalion, which was awarded priority of movement. During the withdrawal the 2nd Battalion was attacked and the unit scattered to reassemble later in the old CP area.”<sup>31</sup> The regimental diary goes on to say that the enemy

continuously attacked the battalion during the withdrawal, scattering units and breaking down communications as the soldiers joined the mob of refugees in their movement to the rear. Some platoons failed to get the word to pull back, deciding on their own after units on their flanks departed. At the side of the road Mel Chandler tried to bring order to chaos as he pulled 7th CAV soldiers out of the sea of people flowing to the rear and organized them on the railroad that ran next to the road. After gathering about three hundred soldiers he began moving back in the direction of Hwanggan to the last location of the regimental CP. Major Witherspoon met him in the vicinity of No Gun Ri and ordered Chandler to establish defensive positions on both sides of the road.<sup>32</sup> The 2nd Battalion began occupying these positions at 0800 hours, but remained disorganized throughout the day as it tried to reestablish order and regain control over missing soldiers and equipment. After the sun came up, platoon sergeants organized details to police up the equipment left behind as soldiers fled in panic. The battalion initially reported the loss of one switchboard, one emergency lighting unit, four light machine guns, four heavy machine guns, three .50-caliber machine guns, two 608 radios, four R300 radios, seven 536 radios, two 3.5-inch rocket launchers and three 75 millimeter recoilless rifles. They returned with nine light machine guns, three heavy machine guns, two .50-caliber machine guns, five R300 radios, four 536 radios, 120 M-1 rifles, twenty-six carbines, seven BAR's, and six 60 millimeter mortars found at the old defensive positions and on the road. The amount and types of equipment left behind indicates that the panic was widespread and included the battalion command post. Further adding to the difficulty of organizing at the new location was the number of soldiers who still had not arrived. Even as late as 2130 the battalion could not account for 119 soldiers.<sup>33</sup>

While 2-7 CAV fled in panic, the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and the two battalions of the 5th Cavalry Regiment continued to defend forward in the vicinity of Ka Ri. Although the division War Diary says the enemy attacked at 0100, the first indication of enemy by the 5th Cav Journal came as a report by the commander of 2-5 CAV at 0220 reporting tanks and infantry to his front. The division reported that the enemy attack was under control by 0400, but the 2-5 CAV commander reported at 0555 that he believed the enemy tanks had taken cover about 1000 yards west of his battalion's position. Curiously the 8th CAV Journal does not describe any of the events of this attack, but the 5th CAV journal sheds light on this omission. At 0725 the 8th CAV commander radioed the 5th CAV CP inquiring on the location of his 2nd Battalion. The 2-5 CAV commander reported at 0805 that 2-8 CAV was about 1000 yards to his northwest, but that he was not in communication with them.<sup>34</sup> The challenge for the 8th CAV appears to be that the regimental command post moved to its new location southwest of No Gun Ri and could not make contact with 2-8 CAV. As a result, it appears as if the 5th CAV commander took control of the fight to include calling in artillery at three locations across the front of the two battalions at 0420.<sup>35</sup>

As 2-7 CAV organized its defense in the vicinity of No Gun Ri, the units forward at Ka Ri began withdrawing to establish defensive positions in the vicinity of Hwanggan, about 3000 yards northeast of No Gun Ri. Like the 7th CAV the division seems a bit disorganized on this day. At 1120 the 5th CAV command post displaced to a location to the east of Hwanggan and closed on its new location at 1220. Close on the heels of their parent headquarters, 2-5 CAV's command post established its new CP southwest of Hwanggan at 1231.<sup>36</sup> Sometime during the middle of the day the regiment pulled the

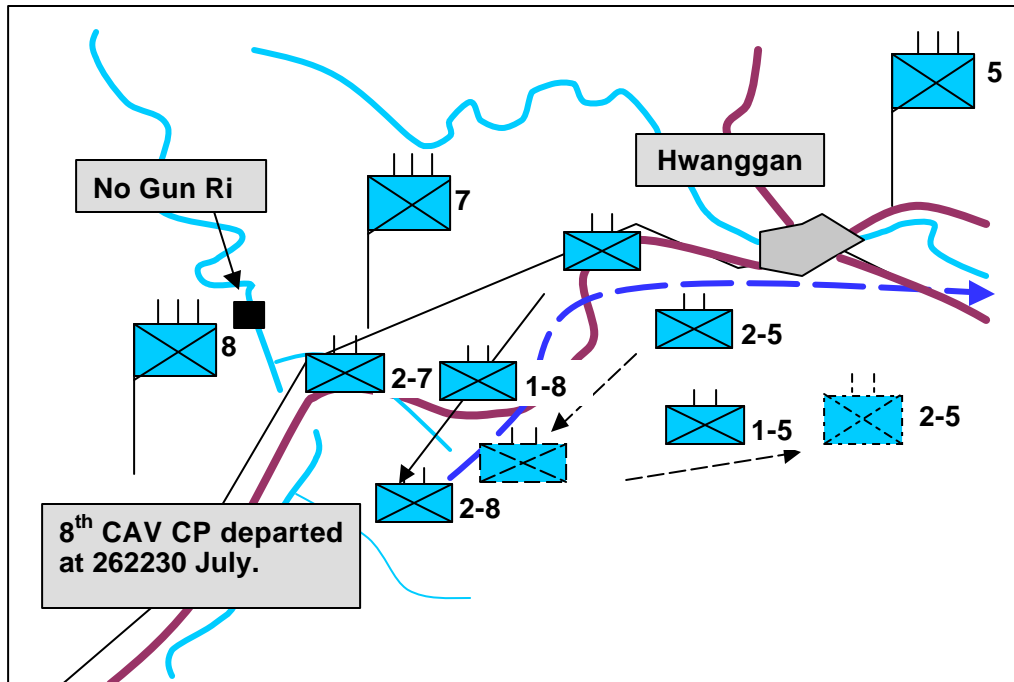


Figure 4. 1st Cavalry Division Repositioning on 26 July.

remainder of its troops back with 1st Battalion establishing positions near the regimental command post and 2nd Battalion assuming the defensive positions just southwest of Hwanggan. Neither the 8th CAV log nor the division log records the time for the withdrawal of 2-8 CAV, but it was probably around the same time. 2-8 CAV initially established positions south of 1-8 CAV just to the east of where 2-7 was establishing its defense. However, the regimental command post stayed forward in the vicinity of No Gun Ri until 2230 hours.<sup>37</sup> At noon the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry arrived at the train station and relieved 1-8 CAV. 2-5 CAV seemed to bounce back and forth between Hwanggan and No Gun Ri. Initially assembling by Hwanggan, it moved forward to positions to the southeast of 2-7 until relieved by 1-7 CAV late in the afternoon. At 1655

the 1-7 CAV commander received an order to conduct a relief in place of 2-5 at this forward position, which then put them in the position to the south of 2-7 CAV. Also, the 7th CAV finally received their liaison officers from the 77th Field Artillery. Up to this point they did not have any direct support artillery.<sup>38</sup>

On this same day the Eighth United States Army Korea (EUSAK) published a policy on dealing with civilians on the battlefield. On 25 July EUSAK met with representatives of the Korean government in Taegu to hammer out a policy to deal with the refugee situation. On 26 July EUSAK released a detailed message outlining the policy, which was supposed to safeguard the lives of both refugees and American soldiers.

Part I: Effective immediately the following procedure will be adhered to by all commands relative to the flow or movement of all refugees in battle areas and rear area. No refugees will be permitted to cross battle lines at any time. Movement of all Koreans in groups will cease immediately. No areas will be evacuated by Koreans without a direct order from Commanding General EUSAK or upon order of Division Commanders. Each division will be assigned three National Police liaison officers to assist in clearing any area of the civilian populace that will interfere with the successful accomplishment of his mission.

Part II: Procedure for clearing areas. Division commanders will inform National Police Officers of the area or sector to be evacuated, the route, and the time the area will be cleared. National Police will immediately clear the area. Food, water, and comfort items for these refugees will be provided by the Vice Minister of Social Affairs through the National Police. All refugees will move along their predetermined route to selected concentration areas from sunup until sundown. This will be a controlled movement under the direction and supervision of the National Police and representatives from the office of Korean Welfare Affairs.

Part III: Movement of Korean civilians during hours of darkness. There will be absolutely no movement of Korean civilians, as individuals or groups, in battle area or rear area, after the hours of darkness. Uniformed Korean police will rigidly enforce this directive.

Part IV: To accomplish the procedure, as outlined in this directive, leaflets will be prepared and dropped in all areas forward and rear of the battle line to effectively

disseminate this information. National Police will further disseminate this information to all Korean civilians by means of radio, messenger, and the press.<sup>39</sup>

The policy released at noon to the divisions quickly made its way down to the units on the front.

The AP and others have pointed to this order, and the order to the 8th Cavalry on 24 July passed by liaison officer at division headquarters as proof of a direct order that gave troops permission to shoot civilians at No Gun Ri. While each of these orders has some faults, neither was a blanket order to shoot civilians or non-combatants. The order to the 8th CAV was a specific order, to a specific unit, for a specific set of circumstances, not a blanket order that applied to every unit in the division. The AP has implied a cover up in the lack of a 7th CAV operations log in the National Archives, and if found, this log would reveal that 7th CAV received the same order. While possible, other units in the division also failed to record this order to include the 5th CAV and the DIVARTY. Neither of these units records such an order because it was not intended for them. Instead, General Gay directed this order at the hard pressed 8th Cavalry Regiment, which the North Koreans attacked on the morning of 24 July using refugees as human shields. The legality of this order may be questionable, but Gay never intended it for the rest of the division.

The Eighth Army refugee policy that Walker's headquarters put out on 26 July did have an impact on the actions at No Gun Ri, but he also did not intend it as an order to shoot civilians. The original AP article mentions the 8th Army policy along with the 24 July order to the 8th CAV, and an order by Major General William Kean, commander of the 25th Infantry Division, who had asked ROK police to evacuate the area that his

division was fighting in. Believing the area evacuated of civilians, Kean told his subordinates that “all civilians seen in this area are to be considered as enemy and action taken accordingly.”<sup>40</sup> Presenting these three different orders together in the text of the article gives the implication that the Eighth Army policy was an order to shoot civilians. Although the AP did not explicitly say that it was such an order, they presented these orders to show that the Americans had a wanton disregard for the lives of civilians. The AP argument merits some degree of truth, but none of these orders or policies gives proof of direct orders to kill civilians at No Gun Ri.

Still, the 8th Army policy was seriously flawed from the start, even if intended to safeguard both American and Korean civilian lives. The policy fairly well outlines what to do for an orderly evacuation of civilians from the battlefield. However, it gives no guidance for the units at the front on how to deal with the massive refugee columns trying to force their way into American lines, other than to say “No refugees will be permitted to cross battle lines at any time. Movement of all Koreans in groups will cease immediately.” Some confusion arose over what “battle lines” meant. For the most part troops believed battle lines were the front lines they defended. So, if civilians were not to cross battle lines where were they to go? The intent was to move them on approved routes, but when the order came down via radio on 26 July, this intent was not clear to the soldiers at the front. Also, the limitation of travelling in groups is perplexing. How did the Eighth Army Staff expect them to move? Koreans fleeing to the south would naturally try to move with their family, friends and neighbors. The policy laid out procedures on how to deal with civilians in rear areas, but how were units to deal with civilians that came from enemy held territory where the ROK police exerted no control?

The policy's flaws became evident hours after Eighth Army sent it to the divisions. The challenge to the soldiers at the front that the policy did not address was what to do with large civilian crowds at their front, who were not allowed to cross the lines. This dilemma was the one that John Osborne's *Life Magazine* article so vividly described.

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<sup>1</sup>7th Cavalry War Diary, entry for 22 July 1950, RG 407, Box 4431, National Archives, College Park, MD.

<sup>2</sup>7th Cavalry War Diary 18-22 July 1950; Melbourne Chandler *Of Garryowen in Glory: The History of the 7th U.S. Cavalry* (Annandale, VA: The Turnpike Press, Inc., 1960), 244.

<sup>3</sup>7th Cavalry War Diary, 24 July 1950.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Several documents cite the 3rd Division as the unit attacking the 1st Cavalry Division in the Defense of Yongdong. Documents also say that elements of the 105th Armored Division were organized with the 3rd Division. See 1st Cavalry Division G2 Summary of Enemy Operations, 16 May 1951, RG 338, Box 39, National Archives, College Park, MD; Department of the Army G2 Report "North Korea Order of Battle", 1 September 1950; 1st Cavalry Division G2, Interrogation of Enemy Prisoner of War Report No. 0014, 7 August 1950; 1st Cavalry Division G2, Interrogation of Enemy Prisoner of War Report No. 0021, 11 August 1950; and 1st Cavalry Division G2, Interrogation of Enemy Prisoner of War Report No. 0025, 12 August 1950; Appleman, 178. According to Appleman the 107th Tank Regiment of the 105th Division supported the 3rd Division during the fight for Taejon. They probably continued to support them at Yongdong.

<sup>6</sup>Mewha, 15.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 124. Numerous intelligence reports record these tactics within the Korean Army. By the time the 1st Cavalry Division arrived it was fairly well documented. Although some of these reports may be exaggerated, the number of sightings and collaboration by EPW interrogations indicate that the practice was widespread.

<sup>10</sup>Appleman, 163-164. US forces killed at least 15 tanks in Taejon primarily from the 3.5-inch rocket. Aircraft killed more north of the city.



<sup>11</sup>8th CAV War Diary, entry for 23-24 July 1950, RG 407, Box 4432, National Archives, College Park, MD.

<sup>12</sup>Johnston, 1. The text of Johnston's report also suggests he may have been at No Gun Ri on 26 July 1950, the same day that the refugees came under American fire. On 26 July he reports "Today this correspondent watched First Cavalry Division troops take up new positions to await the next Communist assault. While preparing to meet tank supported lunges at their center, the United States forces again felt their sensitive and thinly protected flanks probed by North Korean guerrillas clad as refugees." A later description of the battlefield gives away his location. "In the valley off to the left, out of range of United States guns, two tanks clanked casually along a dusty gravel road. Behind, United States Mustang and jet fighter bombers screamed toward the Communist lines, their guns spitting death. Rockets swished like falling Roman candles, kicking up orange bursts among the Communist concentrations." The only place Johnston could have made these observations was up at the front lines where the 7th CAV and elements of the 5th CAV were positioned defending the road from Yongdong and Hwanggan. His vantage point should have also given him a clear view of the railroad and the bridge.

<sup>13</sup>8th CAV War Diary, 25 July; 1st Cav War Diary, 25 July 1950, RG 407, National Archives, College Park, MD.

<sup>14</sup>1st Cavalry Division Daily Logistics Report No 3, 23 July 1950, RG 407, Box 4406, National Archives, College Park, MD.

<sup>15</sup>8th CAV War Diary, 24 July 1950.

<sup>16</sup>1st Cavalry Division War Diary, 24 July, 11-12.

<sup>17</sup>Associated Press "South Koreans Curb Civilian Movement" *New York Times* 26 July 1950, 3.

<sup>18</sup>Department of the Army Inspector General, *No Gun Ri Review* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, January 2001), 85-86. The DA IG determined that 2-8 CAV reported their position by radio after they withdrew from Yongdong. However, this location did not match an overlay they later sent to the Division on 25 July.

<sup>19</sup>5th CAV S2-S3 Journal, entry for 25 July 1950, RG 338, Box 23, National Archives, College Park, MD. The War Diary does not list the number of soldiers that F Company started with; however, an infantry company had over 100 men.

<sup>20</sup>7th CAV War Diary, 25 July 1950.

<sup>21</sup>DA IG, 85-86.

<sup>22</sup>5th CAV S-2-3 Journal, 26 July. The 1st Battalion Commander reported his location to the regiment at 0655 on the 26th. I determined the location for the 2nd battalion based on a situation report from the commander of 2-5 CAV to the regiment, which stated "1. En tanks believed to be under cover off road 1000 yards west of front at (1080.9 – 1474.9). 2. When will wire be in to me from Sinew and Swing? 3. When can mines be activated?" This report clearly shows that on the morning of 26 July 2-5 CAV was on the front line. Bateman states that on the night of the 25th, 2-7 CAV was the front line. The evidence from the other regiments and the division do not support this assertion.

<sup>23</sup>7th CAV War Diary, 25 July 1950.

<sup>24</sup>1Cavalry Division Operations Order Number 10.1-50 dated 250200 July 1950, RG 407, Box 4406, National Archives, College Park, MD.

<sup>25</sup>Bateman, 93.

<sup>26</sup>1st Cavalry Division War Diary, 26 July 1950.

<sup>27</sup>7th CAV War Diary, 26 July 1950.

<sup>28</sup>DA IG, 86. Bateman believes this tank to be one of the tanks previously attached to F Company, 8<sup>th</sup> CAV. However, if 2-5 CAV and 2-8 CAV were forward of 2-7 CAV then they would have reported their return to friendly lines. Bateman believes that 2-5 and 2-8 were much further to the rear.

<sup>29</sup>7th CAV War Diary, 26 July 1950.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Chandler, 246.

<sup>33</sup>7th CAV War Diary, 26 July 1950.

<sup>34</sup>5th CAV S-2-3 Journal, 26 July 1950.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Headquarters 8th Cavalry, Operations Periodic Report No. 9, 271800 July 1950, RG 338, Box 56, National Archives, College Park, MD.

<sup>38</sup>7th CAV War Diary, 26 July 1950. Bateman writes that 2-7 CAV was forward on the night of the 26th. Lack of artillery observers indicates this is probably not true.

Placing a unit without artillery observers as the forward most unit in combat where artillery was the greatest killer on the battlefield would have been an extremely foolish move.

<sup>39</sup>DA IG, 168.

<sup>40</sup>Sang-Hun Choe, Charles J. Hanley and Martha Mendoza, "G.I.'s Tell of a U.S. Massacre in Korean War," *New York Times*, 30 September 1999, 1.

## CHAPTER 4

### THREE DAYS OF HELL

It was during this day, 26 July, that the AP alleges that the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment engaged a large number of refugees with aircraft, mortars, machine gun and rifle fire. According to their report, American soldiers began forcing Koreans out of their homes in villages east of Yongdong on 23 July. Villagers of Chu Gok Ri remember an American officer driving up in a jeep at noon telling them that their homes were about to become part of the front lines. About 500 villagers packed what they could and hiked a back trail to the neighboring village of Im Ke Ri, about a mile and half away, though further from the main road than their own village. Late in the afternoon on the 25th the scene repeated itself as ten American soldiers arrived in a truck, and an officer told the villagers they would have to leave. Now the residents of both Chu Gok Ri and Im Ke Ri packed their belongings and headed northwest towards Hwanggan, joining the refugee throng.<sup>1</sup> According to the Koreans, soldiers escorted them that night to the vicinity of Ka Ri where they pushed the refugees off the road. The villagers tried to rest but the sounds of battle all around them left little chance for sleep.<sup>2</sup> The location at which they rested places the refugees about 1000 yards behind the 2-7 CAV defensive positions. The villagers resumed their trek after the sun rose at 0625, this time without any guards. After moving a couple miles they came upon an American checkpoint where soldiers diverted them off the road onto the railroad tracks. At the railroad other American soldiers stopped them less than a mile from a railroad trestle near No Gun Ri to search

their belongings. While the Americans checked their baggage, the 600 villagers tried to find shade and get some rest.<sup>3</sup>

As they rested the Koreans could see American soldiers in the hills and others near the railroad tracks. Some remember a soldier with a radio on his back, while another soldier talked into the handset. Eventually the soldiers left leaving the refugees on the railroad. Then, Korean witnesses say, airplanes came over the horizon from Hwanggan and dropped in towards the refugees, dropping bombs or rockets and using their machine guns. Next, villagers say that soldiers on the ground opened up with “fireballs” from heavy weapons up on the hills.<sup>4</sup> Some villagers fled to the hills for safety while others continued down the tracks seeking shelter wherever they could find it. Some hid in a culvert, but American troops forced them out, pushing them in the direction of the bridge. Others fled directly to the two tunnels underneath the railroad. As they closed in on the American positions, the AP reports that soldiers opened up with machine guns and rifles. According to James Crume, a radioman with the 2nd Battalion command post, Lieutenant Colonel Heyer received an order from the regiment to open up on the civilians. Gene Hesselman, Captain Chandler’s clerk, said that his commander received orders to fire on the civilians over the radio. “I remember Chandler saying we got to get rid of all of them. He couldn’t on his own. Evidently the division give it to him because he said, ‘Let them have it.’”<sup>5</sup> Machine gunner Norman Tinkler said, “We just annihilated them.”<sup>6</sup> Koreans said that after this initial attack, Americans came out of their holes to the trestle to check the bodies. Soldiers also gathered up the scattered refugees from the hills and the railroad track and pushed them underneath the railroad trestle. One even claims that a soldier was shooting the wounded who could not get to the trestle. Survivors claim that the

Americans continued to shoot into the tunnel packed with three hundred villagers through the rest of the afternoon and shot anyone trying to venture out. After dark the Koreans say that the Americans opened up on them again. Veterans disagreed as to whether there was enemy fire coming from the bridge or not.<sup>7</sup>

According to the AP the next few days remained relatively quiet in the 1st CAV area. However, American soldiers continued to keep the Koreans pinned underneath the bridge. Korean witnesses say warplanes came back the second day dropping bombs and firing rockets on the bridge and strafing it with machine gun fire. Some Koreans who had slipped away after darkness returned on the evening of the second day. On the second night, witnesses described more artillery and gunfire. By the third day, the remaining survivors were mostly children who had burrowed under the bodies of the dead for protection. The firing continued until the soldiers from the 7th CAV left the morning of 29 July, some peering in and shooting into the tunnel as they withdrew.<sup>8</sup> The AP quotes PFC Lyle Jacobson of G Company stating that as “he climbed over the trestle embankment to head south. ‘There were quite a few slaughtered there . . . . But you didn’t know until you got down there and seen all the bodies at the mouth of the tunnel.’”<sup>9</sup>

The Inspector General (IG) examined the events as described by Korean citizens in media sources, most notably the AP. The IG analyzed the Korean version of events based upon witness statements from Korean citizens and American soldiers, War Diaries, staff journals, and photographs. The IG focused on six key events in their discussion and analysis of actions at No Gun Ri: (1) the evacuation from Im Gae Ri, (2) the night spent on the riverbank by the refugees, (3) movement to the railroad tracks and inspection of baggage, (4) the soldier talking on the radio and the air attack, (5) the move to the twin

tunnels and US soldiers' involvement in the process, and (6) the events inside the tunnel and the shootings.<sup>10</sup> The IG team relied on the statements of forty-nine Korean witnesses deemed to include sufficient detail for close scrutiny and analysis.<sup>11</sup>

In the first key event, the evacuation from Im Gae Ri, the IG examined Korean witness accounts of a hostile attitude by American soldiers toward the refugees. Most of the refugees recalled soldiers telling them to leave, but only four mention a hostile attitude by American soldiers, suggesting "that the behavior either occurred in isolated instances or that the refugees perceived the soldiers' mannerisms incorrectly."<sup>12</sup> The IG also discussed the movement of these refugees in its key issue analysis and findings. Here the IG stated they could not determine the reason for the gathering of refugees at Im Gae Ri, and assumed that it was probably not the result of American action. The IG said they could not rule out the possibility of American soldiers evacuating Im Gae Ri, and that the unit most likely to do this was the 5th CAV regiment. However, the IG stated,

there was no reason for soldiers to travel approximately three miles off their movement route to the village of Im Gae Ri during a hasty withdrawal for the purpose of encouraging an additional 400 refugees onto the already crowded roads and aggravating further the congested conditions. It is also unlikely that the soldiers would have performed this evacuation given the widespread knowledge and fear of North Korean infiltrators believed to be present in refugee concentrations.<sup>13</sup>

However, the 5th CAV was not conducting a hasty retreat on the afternoon of 25 July. Instead they established defensive positions between Yongdong and Hwanggan, with 2-5 CAV establishing defensive positions in the vicinity of Im Gae Ri.<sup>14</sup>

The IG's second key event addressed the night the refugees spent at the side of the road, along a riverbank on 25-26 July. Several Korean witnesses claimed that soldiers shot and killed refugees who tried to flee from the group. Sixteen refugees reported that

American soldiers directed them toward the riverbank, two saying near the town of Ha Ga Ri. Witnesses described a sleepless night due to artillery units located nearby and some say a battle took place around them. Again, these statements are consistent with the Division War Diary accounts of an enemy attack in the early morning hours of 26 July. Four witnesses say that American soldiers shot at the refugees while at this location, but the statements were not consistent and were made by some of the youngest witnesses, so the IG concluded it unlikely that American soldiers shot refugees at this point. Older witnesses believed the refugees killed that night died as a result of the battle close to their front.<sup>15</sup>

The IG addressed the movement to the railroad tracks and inspection of baggage by American soldiers as the third key event. Witnesses state that after walking down the road soldiers stopped them at a roadblock near Seo Song Won Ri and led them toward the railroad. A few witnesses say the soldiers were trying to make room for military vehicles on the road. Soldiers had them sit down as they checked the Korean's belongings, but the search yielded nothing. This action was consistent with the practice at the time to screen refugees carefully. Also, the movement to the railway to keep the road clear was consistent with the withdrawal of the 5th CAV and 2-8 CAV in the late morning and early afternoon of 26 July.<sup>16</sup>

The IG addressed the soldier talking into the radio and the air attack in the fourth key event. Ten witnesses described a soldier talking into a radio, many believing he was talking to a plane circling overhead. Shortly thereafter airplanes attacked the refugees. Several of the Koreans said they believed the soldier was directing an air attack on the refugees. They probably made this connection due to the timing of the air attack and



seeing the soldier talking on the radio. Regardless, most of the refugees said that a strafing attack hit them, yet their recollections of the event differed. Some believed that planes attacked with rockets and bombs while others only mentioned machine guns. Younger children simply described explosions or fire. Several American soldiers also reported seeing planes strafe refugees, but most say that the strafing occurred in the vicinity of NK troops or tanks. The reports for 26 July give no indication that NKPA troops were in this area, but indicate that tanks were further to the south. Some of the Korean witnesses say that soldiers shot at refugees who fled from the air attack as they sought refuge in the surrounding hills and ditches, while other soldiers treated wounded immediately after the attack. Koreans also said the Americans helped them leave the area of the tunnels. The IG team did not come to a conclusion on whether soldiers were present at the strafing, but noted the common elements of the various statements in concluding an air attack occurred, and that “many people suffered from the air attack’s effects.”<sup>17</sup> Official records do not mention this air strike, or the wounding of American soldiers that may have been nearby. The IG also determined that 2-7 CAV did not request nor control this attack due to the inability to talk to the aircraft and a lack of a Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) with the regiment.<sup>18</sup>

The movement to the twin tunnels of the railroad trestle makes up the fifth key event. The first refugees at the tunnels came to that location on their own, taking refuge in a ditch near the tunnel entrance. Ten witnesses say that soldiers directed them into the tunnel to join others already inside. A few say that soldiers forced them in at gunpoint. The IG team did not make a determination on this point.<sup>19</sup>

The last key event was the shooting inside the tunnels. Korean witnesses recall that at least two American soldiers came to the entrance of the tunnel before and after shootings took place. Some Koreans talked with the Americans who believed there were spies among the refugees. One Korean witness claimed that one of these soldier said he did not want to follow orders to kill the refugees, so the soldiers would select a few of the young men, and charge them to fulfill their mission of finding guerrillas. Many Koreans say the younger men were able to escape, leaving the tunnels full of women, children, and old men. Witnesses describe firing lasting for the next two to four days, forcing them to stay prone within the tunnels. They also remember stacking up bodies for protection and drinking water from a stream full of blood.<sup>20</sup> Twelve veterans told the IG of various types of fire to include machine gun, mortar, and rifle, in the direction of unidentified people in civilian clothing outside the tunnels near No Gun Ri. Some veterans said they fired over the refugees' heads to get them to stop moving toward the American positions. Some veterans also said they observed fire coming from the trestle and also recall intermittent NKPA and American artillery fire throughout the period.<sup>21</sup>

As the sun fell on 26 July, the 1st Cavalry Division continued to adjust their defense of the Hwanggan area. During the early evening 1-7 CAV completed the relief of 2-5 CAV, which moved further to the east to the left flank of 1-5 CAV oriented to the south. In addition to relieving 1-5, 1-7 CAV extended its positions to the right taking over the defense of Hill 206 and the positions just to the east of the railroad trestle. The extension of 1-7 CAV to these positions allowed 2-7 to move further to the north away from the bridge and the civilians. Although the battalion could still cover the bridge with fire, it could not fire directly into the tunnels and was beyond the range of most small

arms fire. However, 1-7 CAV was directly to the east of the bridge and would have the most direct observation and fields of fire to shoot into the tunnels for the next three days. The boundary for the two battalions met along the railroad about 500 yards to the northeast of the bridge. Meanwhile the battalions of 8th CAV moved to the east to refit and assume the role of division reserve. 1-8 CAV established positions 3500 yards east of Hwanggan, while 2-8 CAV occupied positions another 6000 yards further east. Curiously the regimental CP stayed forward just to the southwest of No Gun Ri until 2230 on the evening of 26 July.<sup>22</sup>

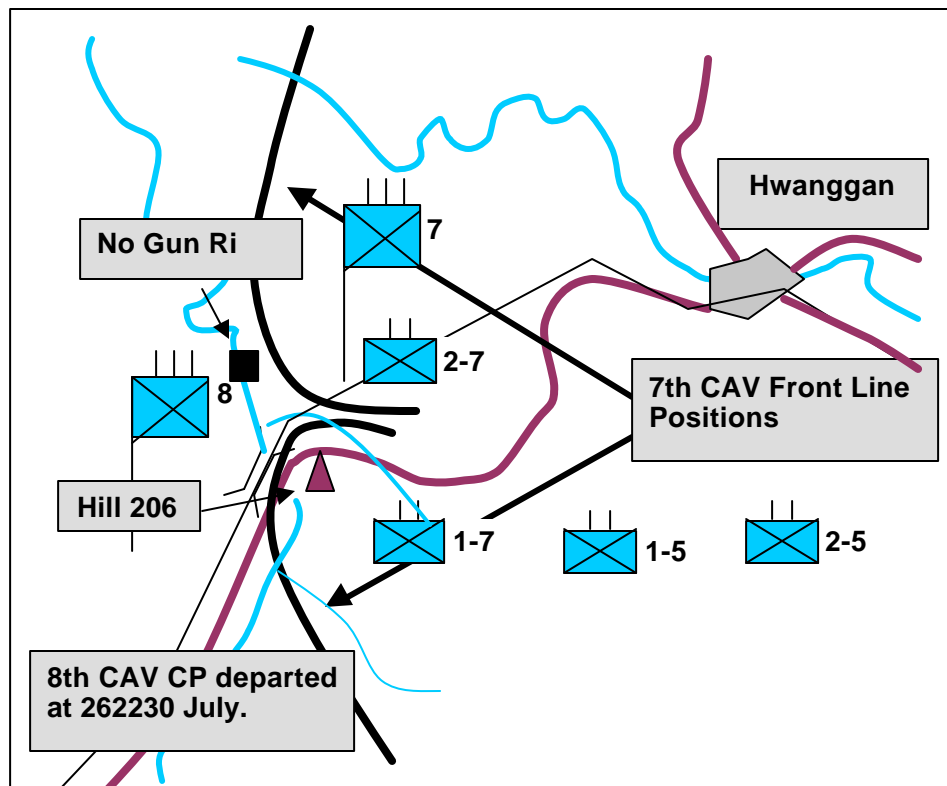


Figure 5. Situation Evening 26 July 1950.

Contrary to the account by the Koreans and the AP, the battlefield was a dynamic place from 26 to 29 July as the North Koreans probed the American positions around Hwanggan. As day broke on 27 July, 2-7 CAV reported two columns of enemy soldiers on the railway about 1500 yards to the south of the bridge, heading toward their positions. At 0630 the 1st Battalion CP and C Company came under a mortar and artillery attack. Fifteen minutes later Colonel Nist reported to division that the regiment had successfully repulsed the enemy attack. The size of this attack suggests the North Koreans were probing the American positions to determine the disposition of 7th CAV defenses, while other units moved to the flanks and rear of the division. Shortly after this attack a friendly aircraft, perhaps called in to support the defense, strafed the 1st Battalion CP. Although no one was injured, this event led Nist to press for a TACP to help control aircraft in support of the fight.<sup>23</sup>

The enemy continued to probe the 7th CAV throughout the day. At 1256 enemy tanks set up in the village of Sot' Anmak, about 1500 yards west of the 1st Battalion positions and fired on the Americans defending on the hill. 1st Battalion responded with mortar fire, which seemed to cause the tanks to withdraw. Meanwhile the regimental command post and the 77th FA battalion received enemy artillery fire throughout the day, sometimes getting rather intense. During one nineteen-minute period, enemy artillery pounded the regimental CP with 23 rounds. Life in the 77th FA was more dangerous, with the battalion receiving sixty rounds in one twenty- minute period. The accuracy and intensity of the artillery fire indicates that the NKPA 3rd Division had successfully infiltrated observers to adjust fire on key American positions.<sup>24</sup>

Much of the rest of the division remained relatively quiet throughout the day, but G2 reports indicate that the enemy was starting to mass forces four to six thousand yards north and south of Hwanggan and trying to conduct a double envelopment of the division.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, the enemy continued to probe the 7th CAV front. At 2008 hours, the regiment again reported two enemy tanks at Sot' Anmak, this time with two more infantry columns. The regiment coordinated an air strike with the 27th Regiment, the unit to their north flank, to take care of this threat. Again, the North Koreans did not seem to press the attack and the 7th CAV held its ground.<sup>26</sup>

Lee's 3rd NKPA Division increased the pressure on the 1st CAV on the 28th while the 15th Division penetrated the 27th Regiment of the 25th Division. Lees' troops focused their attack on 1-7 CAV defending just to the east of the railroad bridge under which the surviving refugees huddled. The North Koreans attacked furiously in the morning with infantry on both flanks supported by tanks on the road. The enemy also used mobs of refugees to mask the fires of the defending troops, herding the civilians in front of their attack. The 1st Battalion commander requested concentrations of artillery and air, especially on the hard pressed left flank, and artillery claimed credit for destroying five tanks during the day. Meanwhile enemy soldiers successfully penetrated the seam between the 2nd Battalion and the 27th Regiment with an unknown number of troops. The situation for Lieutenant Colonel John Michaelis' 27th Regiment, the Wolfhounds, deteriorated as enemy soldiers to the north threatened to cut his unit off from the rest of the 25th Division. The Wolfhounds had fought well under their new commander, but they could not hold much longer so Michaelis asked General Gay for permission to withdraw his unit through the 1st CAV. At 0900 hours Michaelis and

Brigadier General Allen, the assistant division commander, met with Colonel Nist at the 7th Regiment command post to discuss a counter attack to restore the lines to allow the withdrawal of the 27th. According to the plan, the 8th CAV would attack with one battalion to restore the 27th's right flank and one battalion would establish a position in the rear to serve as a reserve force. 2-7 CAV would attack to close the gap that had opened between them and the 27th. Before 2-7 could execute the plan, B Company, 27th Regiment successfully counterattacked to close the gap.<sup>27</sup>

The enemy continued to push soldiers northeast up the main road towards No Gun Ri. At 1307 the 7th CAV requested artillery on tanks and infantry located at Sot Anmak and heading towards their defense. Despite maintaining pressure on the 7th CAV the enemy did not press the fight and the situation on the front remained stable. However, with enemy pressure building to the north and south, the division published instructions for a withdrawal to begin early the next morning. These orders instructed the 7th CAV to displace to defensive positions to the east of Hwanggan while the 5th CAV maintained defensive positions to cover their withdrawal. According to the regiment's plan, 2nd Battalion would withdraw first at 0300, followed immediately by 1st Battalion. On the morning of the 29th, the regiment ordered 2-7 to begin their withdrawal at 0530. Despite a much better plan than the fiasco of 26 July, 1st Battalion withdrew early, which caused confusion during the movement. The enemy also maintained pressure on the regiment with tank and artillery fires. Still, the regiment cleared the rail station at Hwanggan by 0820 hours and moved on to its new positions. The regimental diary also records that the regiment continued to evacuate refugees throughout the day.<sup>28</sup>

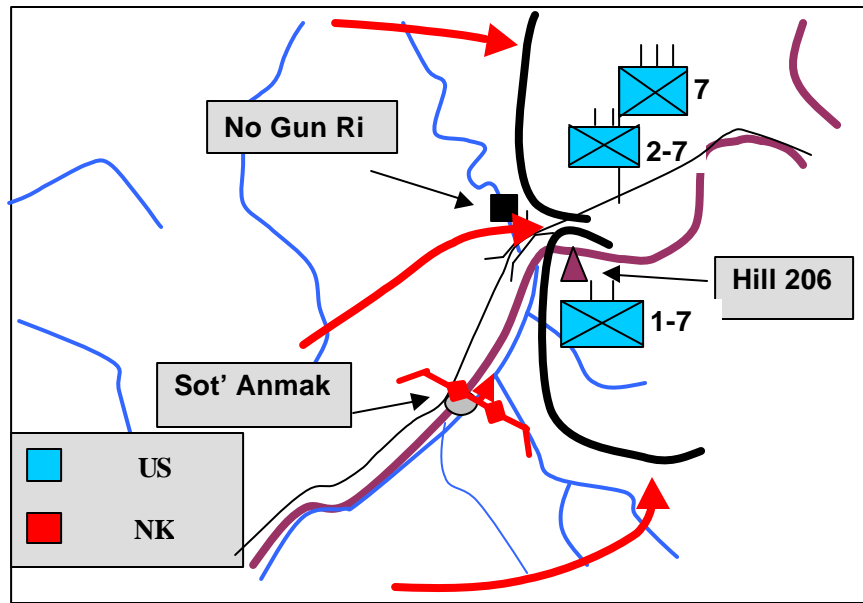


Figure 6. NKPA 3d Division Attacks on the 7th Cavalry Regiment, 27-28 July.

<sup>1</sup>Hanley, 110.

<sup>2</sup>Hanley, 113.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 116.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 133.

<sup>6</sup>Choe, "G.I.'s Tell of a US Massacre in Korean War," 1.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Hanley, 138-145.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>10</sup>DA IG, 142-152.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 139.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 142-143.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 175.

<sup>14</sup>1st Cavalry Division Operations Order Number 10.1-50; 5th CAV S2-S3 Journal, 26 July. I base this position on the enemy spot report on the morning of 26 July, and their planned position in 1st Cavalry Division order 10.1-50.

<sup>15</sup>DA IG, 144.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 144-45.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 147.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 177.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 148.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 148-149.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 181-183.

<sup>22</sup>8<sup>th</sup> CAV Operations Summary, 27 July 1950.

<sup>23</sup>7th CAV War Diary, 27 July 1950.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 28 July 1950.

<sup>25</sup>1st Cavalry Division Periodic Intelligence Report (PIR) #6, 27 July 1950, RG 338, Box 45, National Archives, College Park, MD.

<sup>26</sup>7th CAV War Diary, 27 July 1950.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 28 July 1950.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 29 July 1950.



## CHAPTER 5

### THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS AS THEY FIRST SEEM

Debate surrounding No Gun Ri has centered on who has told the truth concerning the events during the last week of July 1950. The AP account, relying primarily on Korean witnesses, paints a picture of a massive deliberate killing of Koreans by American soldiers at the direction of the officers of the 7th CAV, under the orders of the division commander. The AP backs this view up with testimony from veterans who verified the Korean version of events. Bateman and others view events primarily from the American perspective, discounting the testimony of the Koreans as exaggerated and motivated by potential profit due to a multi-million dollar lawsuit filed on behalf of Korean survivors. Bateman also argued that the passage of time has warped the memory of Koreans as to the events of No Gun Ri and that discussion over the years has led to the building of a common story morphed out of the collective memory of the survivors. Likewise, the memories of veteran's would also have faded with time, recalling events inaccurately and updating the story through the years while exchanging accounts with other veterans at reunions.<sup>1</sup>

The AP version does warrant some level of criticism. The reporters relied heavily on the testimony of Korean witnesses and told the story primarily from the Korean point of view. While the Koreans were probably not intentionally lying, studies have shown that a person's memory changes as they age, and memories of early childhood events in particular become distorted through time.<sup>2</sup> While focusing on the Korean point of view, the AP does not clearly address the complexity of the battlefield. They downplayed reports of guerrillas intermingling with refugees as exaggerations by soldiers. They do

not mention North Korean attacks that used the refugees to mask their movement as recorded by army records and press accounts on 24 July, 26 July, and 28 July. The AP does not mention guerrilla attacks in rear areas of the division during this period. On midnight 25 July, just an hour before 2-7 CAV's panicked withdrawal, thirty guerrillas fired on the division headquarters at Kwan-ni. At 1415 hours on the 26th in the same area guerrillas wounded two American soldiers.<sup>3</sup> Other documents report enemy snipers in rear areas and attacks on artillery units.<sup>4</sup> The Division Artillery reported that the enemy was even using children as young as ten years olds to observe and report on positions.<sup>5</sup> Finally, the AP also does not address measures taken by the 1st CAV Division to deal with the refugee problem. They do not mention the evacuation of refugees from Yongdong by train on 23 July, or the 30,000 refugees that passed through Yongdong that day.<sup>6</sup> Measures taken by the 191st Counter-Intelligence Corps and the division's 545th MPs also receive no mention.<sup>7</sup> These omissions combined with emphasis placed on orders by Gay to the 8th CAV gives one the impression that the 1st CAV indiscriminately killed civilians in their area of operations.

The AP has received the most criticism on the testimony of veterans who corroborated the Korean version of events. Reporters from *U.S. News and World Report* conducted their own interviews and determined that some veterans may not have been at No Gun Ri, and that the AP misquoted others. Ed Daily, quoted in the original story as a machine gunner, made the circuit of news shows, becoming a highly visible and convincing witness to the actions at No Gun Ri. Investigation by other news organizations revealed that Daily was a mechanic in another unit at the time of the incident.<sup>8</sup> Further investigation into Daily's background revealed that he had lied about

his war service for years, to include claiming to have received a battlefield commission. Two other “witnesses,” Eugene Hesselman and Delos Flint, also may not have been at No Gun Ri. Hesselman, Captain Chandler’s clerk, was quoted in the first article “Chandler said, ‘The hell with all those people. Let’s get rid of all of them.’”<sup>9</sup> Hesselman also told the AP that US troops received fire from the tunnels under the bridge, and recovered a machine gun after searching the area. Flint, a private in F Company, said an air attack caught him near the bridge along with the refugees. He described the event as a deliberate killing of the refugees, but he refused to fire on them.<sup>10</sup> The testimony of these two men came under scrutiny because they may have been wounded and evacuated before the events at No Gun Ri. According to morning reports on 27 July, the battalion evacuated both men to an aid station by the morning of 26 July. The entries indicated this information should have been included in the 26th July report, but were not because of the confusion of that morning.<sup>11</sup> This means they were probably wounded during the panic. Also, the regimental War Diary lists Flint as a casualty for 25 July, as do orders for the Purple Heart.<sup>12</sup> Both men’s refusal to interview with the IG casts further doubt on the accuracy of their statements to the AP.<sup>13</sup>

Other veterans told reporters from *U.S. News and World Report* that the AP misquoted them in the original story. Retired colonel Robert Carroll was a lieutenant at the time of No Gun Ri. According to the AP, Carroll “remembers battalion riflemen opening fire on the refugees from their foxholes. ‘This is right after we get orders that nobody comes through, civilian, military, nobody.’”<sup>14</sup> *U.S. News* says Carroll was furious about the way his words were used to support the story. Carroll a platoon leader in H Company, “says emphatically that he told the AP there was no order telling the machine

gunners to open fire on the refugees and that none did.”<sup>15</sup> Carroll said that he did stop some troops shooting at some refugees, but that the troops were in their foxholes over 300 yards away and they were not hitting anyone. He made the troops stop, but then someone shot a kid running down the track. He grabbed the kid to bring him to the tunnel where the battalion surgeon was treating “maybe a half dozen women and kids who had been wounded with shrapnel.”<sup>16</sup> Machine gunner James Kerns said the AP twisted his words. Herman Patterson of F Company said his statement that “It was just a wholesale slaughter,” was taken out of context and that he was referring to the near slaughter of his own unit at the Naktong River defense a few weeks later.<sup>17</sup>

Bateman’s book also falls short in some key areas by downplaying the Korean witness testimony, relying too heavily on morning reports, and stating several bold assumptions as fact. Bateman also fails to fully depict the battlefield. First, although he correctly asserts that the Korean’s memories would have altered events over time, he goes too far by not adequately considering the events from the Korean point of view. Instead, he relies almost entirely on American testimony skewing the story too far in the other direction. Understandably, he did not have the same access to Koreans as he did to American veterans and language barriers would prevented him from analyzing Korean statements. However, enough evidence exists from the Korean version of events to analyze their story based on the movement of American troops and intelligence reports of enemy action. Bateman too easily dismissed their version of events believing that similarities in villagers stories indicates that they have built a common story of events based on shared memory, but which is not true. He also believes that many Korean witnesses were motivated by the potential for receiving monetary compensation.<sup>18</sup> While

money may have been a factor for some people, this alone does not mean they made up their story. In contrast, the IG's analysis of the Korean witnesses indicated that the Koreans stories varied on many points reflecting different points of view based on the experience and age of the person at the time of the incident.<sup>19</sup> Bateman also shows his lack of understanding of Korean culture by saying that there were no reliable records remaining after the war.<sup>20</sup> Granted, the war would have caused the loss of many records on who lived in the area. However, the Koreans have long been meticulous administrators and would have tried to reconstruct the village and county records as soon after the war as possible. One of the first items families would have taken with them when they evacuated were records showing genealogy back several generations. In particular the eldest first son of every family and the leader of each clan would have had an accurate record of all village inhabitants. Often these records hang proudly in Korean homes to show the lineage of the family.<sup>21</sup> Family and clan leaders would have tried to reconstruct any destroyed records as soon as possible before memories faded. Although Bateman did not have access to these records, that does not mean they do not exist.

The second area where Bateman fell short lies in his insistence in the accuracy of morning reports. Bateman correctly argued that, as written, the morning reports submitted by F and H companies on 27 July indicate that Delos Flint and Eugene Hesselman received wounds on 25 or 26 July and the battalion evacuated them to the rear. However, morning reports for this period of the Korean War were extremely inaccurate. Bateman explained how the system was supposed to work: First sergeants usually received the reports from subordinate platoons in the morning at breakfast. The first sergeants then consolidated the platoon reports before forwarding to higher. The chaos of 26 July

prevented units from submitting their reports, and the one for 27 July made up for this discrepancy.<sup>22</sup> Although this was how the system was supposed to work, in practice units were not very efficient in submitting and preparing these reports. Russell Gugeler's *Combat Actions in Korea* includes numerous footnotes on discrepancies in morning reports. Referring to Task Force Smith he noted that reports for 5 July "appear to have been made up at some later date, and they do not accurately record all the changes and events as they occurred."<sup>23</sup> An Eighth Army after action report on administrative matters revealed that units often made up these reports weeks, sometimes months later trying to reconstruct events from notebooks and memory.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, an examination of the F Company morning report for 27 July gives further indications the battalion may have reconstructed these reports at a later date. One report stated that on 26 July the company "moved fr[om] Rokin-Ri assembled near Yongdong encountered enemy 1 EM MIA."<sup>25</sup> The same report said the company returned to No Gun Ri on the 27th.<sup>26</sup> These entries were clearly one day off. Therefore, although records indicate Hesselman and Flint were not at No Gun Ri, the possibility exists that they were there, and one should weigh their testimony with the appropriate grain of salt.

Finally, Bateman makes several bold assumptions that he presents as facts, detracting from the validity of his argument. The first two assumptions have to do with guerrillas and the nature of the Korean War. Bateman gives too much credit to the existence of South Korean guerrilla groups and downplays the abilities of North Korean guerrillas, or partisans, as part of the NKPA. He first did this in his discussion of the roadblock behind the 2-8 CAV. Bateman says that indigenous guerrillas from South Korea established this roadblock and it probably consisted of only a platoon. However, it

is more likely that either NKPA guerrillas or regular infantry established this roadblock. The disposition of the 8th CAV created a huge gap between the defending battalions. Intelligence reports indicated that enemy forces were massing to the north of 2-8 CAV in the vicinity of the roadblock. The inability of the 2nd Battalion, or relief columns, to break the roadblock also indicated that more than a platoon was at this location. Finally, a roadblock such as this one was consistent with North Korean doctrine.

Bateman also insists that indigenous South Korean guerrillas were underneath the bridge with the refugees. While a possibility this is certainly not a fact. For some reason Bateman downplayed the possibility that North Korean guerrillas could also have been in the tunnel. Regardless, it seems unlikely that a handful of South Korean guerrillas would have fired on main defensive positions in an area from which they could not withdraw. Guerrillas would have more likely tried to avoid contact with main forces, hid their weapons and slipped away after contact with main US forces. Bateman pointed to an entry on the Regimental S4 log for the 27th as further proof of guerrillas under the bridge. However, this entry merely stated that soldiers turned in two enemy weapons, but the document does not state where the soldiers captured the weapons.<sup>27</sup>

One other fact that Bateman assumed was that 2-7 CAV was the only unit on the front line starting the evening of 25 July. He discusses in great detail how F Company, 8th CAV must have run into 2-7 when they tried to make it back to friendly lines, and this may have helped lead to the panic early in the morning of 26 July.<sup>28</sup> Bateman fails to mention that 5th CAV and 2-8 CAV were also in the vicinity and that they remained forward while the soldiers of 2-7 fled to the rear. As a result, he misses key points about

that morning which impacted on the events at No Gun Ri, to include an actual attack by the North Koreans and the withdrawal of the other battalions.

It is possible that both the American veterans and Korean civilians told the truth from their point of view. Consistencies in the various accounts include the strafing of refugees by aircraft, the firing of mortars soon after the air attack, and machine gun and small arms fire at them in the vicinity of the railroad trestle. Koreans say that some Americans told them they were under orders to shoot them, while Americans say they were under orders not to let the refugees pass through their lines. Different points of view would naturally result from different locations on the battlefield and whether one was either sending bullets down range, or one was in the area of impact. Language barriers inhibited the ability of Americans and Koreans to communicate, causing confusion and frustration. The evidence presented by the IG, AP and Bateman clearly show that something happened at No Gun Ri. Testing the testimony of all the witnesses against unit records and press reports from the time helps in the construction of what likely happened at No Gun Ri during the last week of July 1950.

Just after midnight on 26 July, the Division G3 calls all regimental S3s to the division command post at Hwanggan to discuss adjustments to the withdrawal plan addressed in Division Order 10.2-50. They discuss the final details of command and control and supporting the withdrawal with artillery and close air support. The 8th Cavalry Regiment will control air during the withdrawal since they are the only regiment with a TACP and the location of their command post gives them an excellent vantage point to coordinate artillery and air with the withdrawal of units from the front. After the meeting breaks up, Major Witherspoon calls back to the 7th CAV command post alerting



the regiment for movement, and starting the chain of events that leads to panic within the 2nd Battalion. The 7th CAV falls back leaving the 5th and 8th CAV to deal with an enemy probe against the front.

Major Witherspoon tries to regain control of the mob that is 2-7 and organizes them in the vicinity of No Gun Ri. The regimental command post is likely in disarray with little capability to gain control of the situation without leaders like Witherspoon and Chandler getting on the ground to sort it out. Meanwhile the 8th CAV command post prepares for the withdrawal of its 2nd Battalion and the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 5th CAV. The disorganization of the 7th CAV's CP and the displacement of the 5th CAV made 8th CAV's position all the more important. It provided the only operational command post of the three regiments during the withdrawal from the positions east of Yongdong. To assist in establishing the defense of Hwanggan, 1-8 CAV occupies defensive positions about 1500 yards up the road to the east of No Gun Ri.

As the Korean refugees head towards No Gun Ri, troops stop them along the road and moved them towards the railroad. These soldiers, probably from 2-5 or 2-8 CAV withdrawing in the late morning and early afternoon of 26 July, move the Koreans off the road to allow vehicles to move to the rear.<sup>29</sup> After the refugees reach the railroad other soldiers stop them and search their belongings, a common practice by American soldiers trying to ensure guerrillas do not infiltrate through friendly lines. Koreans rest on the railroad embankment while the soldiers check their belongings and an officer or NCO, using an SC-300 radio, requests instructions on what to do with the refugees. The officer received orders to keep the civilians there; they were not to pass through friendly lines. These instructions are consistent with the new refugee policy just then promulgated.

After all of the withdrawing vehicles pass through the roadblock, these soldiers return to their units.

About this time, the 8th CAV calls in an air strike previously planned to support the withdrawal from the forward positions. Before the air attack, the regiment calls for white phosphorous rounds from the division artillery to mark the target for the aircraft. Tragically, the artillery lands short among the refugees on the railroad embankment. The F-80s, flying too fast to accurately determine the target, identifies the smoke and engage the civilians.

This scenario makes more sense than the belief by many Koreans that soldiers on the ground near the railroad ordered the air attack. The 7th CAV definitely could not have gotten close air support in such a rapid manner. The regiment did not have a TACP at the time, was still trying to sort itself out from the confusion of the night before, and was completely untrained in the use of close air support. The air force required the use of a TACP to guide aircraft for any use of air in the proximity of troops. The only unit within the division with a TACP at the time was the 8th CAV.<sup>30</sup> Close air support requests at this point in the war took an inordinate amount of time. A memo released by the division artillery on 28 July told units to expect planned air support missions to take at least four hours, unplanned missions would likely take much longer. However, it makes sense that the division would have used aircraft to support troops withdrawing from enemy contact. The division likely had a pre-planned mission that went awry when the marking rounds fell short. The proximity of the air attack to friendly troops also indicates that they did not hit the intended target.<sup>31</sup>

Next, someone in the positions on the hills decides to fire mortars on the refugees believing the battalion was under attack. It is also possible that someone was trying to use mortar fire to keep the refugees from coming through the lines and to get them to move away from the American positions. If so, this had to be one of the stupidest ways to get refugees to move in a specific direction and extremely negligent. Mortars, as an area weapon, are quite unpredictable as to the point of impact. To use this type of weapon to move refugees in the direction one wants them to go is absurd. The clearance for firing mortars at the refugees on the railroad would have come from an officer. Commanders had to give approval for the firing of mortars within their area of operations. This clearance of fires could have come from one of any number of officers, but most likely either the battalion commander, one of the company commanders, or the battalion executive officer.

If the intent of firing mortars was to have the refugees move away from the battalion, it actually had the reverse effect. Refugees, seeking cover from the air attack and mortar fire flee towards the railway trestle, which many of them knew lay a short distance ahead. Soldiers on the hill, perhaps initially masked from the events unfolding down the railroad see the refugees wearing white clothes running towards them, seeking cover and hiding to avoid getting hit. Machine gunners open up believing that either they were under attack, or that the refugees were a legitimate target, despite being civilians. Other soldiers closer to the refugees see what is happening and try to push the refugees towards the trestle to keep them under cover. After a short period, leaders restore order on the line and soldiers move forward towards the trestle. While a guerrilla, either South Korean or from the NKPA, could have been among the refugees, the possibility seems

remote. Soldiers had checked the belongings for the refugees when they stopped them at the roadblock. Also, a guerrilla would do everything in his power to avoid contact with the main defending forces. The guerrillas' main goal was to either infiltrate to get to a rear area or to determine the strength and disposition of American forces. If pinned down a guerrilla would have been more inclined to get rid of his weapon and withdraw than to open up on American forces defending in strength.

The motivation for soldiers to shoot into the refugees would have been as varied as the number of soldiers in the area. Once the firing started, other soldiers quickly join in. Scared, untrained, lacking cohesion, missing leaders, and disorganized from the debacle the night before, soldiers panic and the line opens up as it often does with green troops in combat. Some soldiers recognize that the refugees are not a threat and do not fire. While some soldiers fire their weapons, others wanted to herd the refugees under the bridge and fire over their heads with warning shots to get them to and keep them under the trestle. Some soldiers panic thinking they are under attack. Some probably believe that they are under orders to shoot civilians and did so. Finally, some soldiers, such as machine gunner Norman Tinkler, do it because he was scared and did not trust Korean civilians.

After officers and NCOs restore order on the line, some soldiers go forward to check on the refugees. Medics treat some of the wounded, which the regiment then evacuates. Conversations in English and Japanese between Koreans and Americans lead the Koreans to believe the Americans said they were under orders to shoot them. More likely the Americans were trying to tell them to stay under the trestle, that they were under orders not to let them pass. Thus, miscommunication due to barriers in language

and culture lead to the Korean belief that the Americans are intent on killing them. Other Americans continue to herd Koreans into the tunnel, which begins to fill up. Americans are dealing with the dilemma of what to do with the civilians without letting them pass. As a result they decide to herd them under the trestle which seems to provide some degree of protection. The soldiers who came down eventually return to their positions, leaving the refugees in the trestle. As night falls some refugees try to venture out of the tunnels while Americans in the hills shoot near them to keep them under the bridge. That night 1-7 CAV takes control of the positions opposite the bridge from 2-7 CAV. The soldiers of 2-7 move further to the north, for the most part out of the range of the bridge, except for machine gun fire. Through the night NKPA soldiers, some located in the vicinity of the bridge, fire on the American positions. (The North Koreans often used small arms fire while conducting reconnaissance on American positions.) The soldiers from 1-7 CAV, not aware of the situation from earlier in the day open up on the bridge and the surrounding area.

Through the course of the next few days North Korean probes and American defensive positions keep the civilians trapped inside a deadly engagement area. The North Korean's intend their probes to keep the Americans focused on the road to their front, while other forces infiltrate to the flanks and rear of the American defense. The North Koreans also launch several attacks on the 1st Battalion. Their attack on 28 July threatens both the left and right flanks of the 1st Battalion. Of note, the right flank is in the vicinity of the bridge. (Any attack that pressured the battalion's right flank would have gone right across the bridge.) While the North Korean attacks do not threaten to dislodge the Americans from their positions, they would have made the area to the

immediate front extremely dangerous as the center of an engagement area with both the NKPA and US soldiers trading small arms, mortar and artillery fire. The attacks by the NKPA and the American's defense of the position are consistent with Korean accounts of shooting and explosions continuing on the bridge for the next several days. Finally, 7th CAV's withdrawal on the morning of 29 July puts an end to the ordeal of the Koreans underneath the bridge.

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<sup>1</sup>Bateman, 228-231.

<sup>2</sup>Brian Duffy, "Memory and Its Flaws," *U.S. News and World Report*, 12 June 2000, 22.

<sup>3</sup>Eighth United States Army Korea, Situation Report, 26 July 1960, RG 338, Box 27, National Archives, College Park, MD.

<sup>4</sup>1st Cavalry Division, Periodic Intelligence Report #5, 26 July 1950, RG 338, Box 45, National Archives; 1st Cavalry Division Artillery War Diary, 23 July 1950, RG 407, Box 4424, National Archives, College Park, MD.

<sup>5</sup>1st Cavalry Division Artillery War Diary, 23 July 1950. The Divarty War Journal entry for this date records "Two North Koreans were captured (ages 10 and 11 years) and admitted that their mission was to observe and report our positions."

<sup>6</sup>1st Cavalry Division, Daily Logistics Report No. 3, 23 July 1950, RG 407, Box 4406, National Archives, College Park, MD; 1st Cavalry Division Periodic Intelligence Report #2, 23 July 1950, RG 338, Box 45, National Archives, College Park, MD.

<sup>7</sup>545 Military Police Company, Unit Activities Report, 5 August 1950, RG 407, Box 4406, National Archives, College Park, MD; 1st Cavalry Division G2, G2 Monthly Narrative for 25 June to 31 July 1950, 1 August 1950, RG 407, Box 4405, National Archives, College Park, MD; 1st Cavalry Division G2, G2 Summary of Enemy Operations, 16 May 1951, RG 338, Box 39 National Archives, College Park, MD. This last document, written almost a year later, is a summary of enemy actions that 1st CAV faced during the war up to that point. It discusses the action around Yong-dong and Hwanggan to include attacks on 26 and 27 July while the incident at No Gun Ri occurred. The document also states that the 191st CIC detachment "screened and evacuated via mountain trails, stream beds and rail lines over 400,00 refugees from HWANGGAN-KUMCHON-WAEGWAN areas and the TAEGU perimeter. This action apprehended enemy agents, removed a security threat, kept tactical roads open to military traffic and

unquestionably saved hundreds of native [sic] from becoming casualties of war.” While the numbers may be exaggerated, the report gives evidence of division efforts to evacuate civilians throughout the period to include during the events at No Gun Ri.

<sup>8</sup>Joe Galloway, “Doubts About a Korean Massacre,” *U.S. News and World Report*, 12 May 2000, 43.

<sup>9</sup>Choe, “G.I.’s Tell of a US Massacre in Korean War,” 1.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>Company F, 7th Cavalry Morning Report, 27 July 1950, available at <http://usnews.com/usnews/news/korea>; Company H, 7th Cavalry Morning Report, 27 July 1950; Internet; accessed on 4 November 2002.

<sup>12</sup>7th Cavalry War Diary, 25 July 1950; 1st Cavalry Division, General Orders Number 43: Award of the Purple Heart, 28 July 1950, RG 338, Box 22, National Archives, College Park, MD.

<sup>13</sup>DA IG, 122.

<sup>14</sup>Choe, “G.I.’s Tell of a US Massacre in Korean War,” 1.

<sup>15</sup>Galloway, “Doubts About a Korean Massacre.”

<sup>16</sup>“Reliable Sources? Examining the Discrepancies in Eyewitness Accounts,” *U.S. News and World Report*, 12 May 2000 [magazine on-line]; available from <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/korea/press.htm>; Internet; accessed on 5 March 2003.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Bateman, 126.

<sup>19</sup>DA IG, 120.

<sup>20</sup>Bateman, 123.

<sup>21</sup>While attending the ROKA Staff College, I visited the father’s home of one of my classmates. My friend proudly showed me the records of his family that went back seven or eight generations. He also told me his father was a leader of their clan. This title gets handed down from generation to generation to the first son of the clan leader, the clan being tied to the village. Although the influence of the clan leader continues to erode, they still exert some influence over the settling of local disputes and issues.

<sup>22</sup>Bateman, 162-168.

<sup>23</sup>Russell A. Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1970), 19. Endnote, 5.

<sup>24</sup>Charles G. Cleaver, *History of the Korean War Vol. II, Part 2: Personnel Problems* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1951), 29-30. The Military History Section of Far East Command prepared this document.

<sup>25</sup>F Company, 7th Cavalry Morning Report, 27 July 1950.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup>S4 Journal, 7th Cavalry, 28 July 1950, RG 407, Box 4431, National Archives, College Park, MD.

<sup>28</sup>Bateman, 92-100.

<sup>29</sup>DA IG, 144. Statements by Korean witnesses to the IG mention that vehicles were on the main road, which would be consistent with a withdrawal.

<sup>30</sup>8th Cavalry War Diary, 22 July 1950, RG 407, Box 4402, National Archives, College Park, MD. The 8<sup>th</sup> CAV received a TACP under the command of 1LT Bryant of the 40th Flight Squadron on 22 July.

<sup>31</sup>Headquarters EUSAK, Office of the Artillery Officer "Artillery Marking of Targets for Close Air Support" 28 July 1950, RG 338, Box 127, National Archives, College Park, MD. This document, published two days after the start of the incident at No Gun Ri, outlines procedures for control of CAS. It also states that CAS will never be used within 500 yards of front lines. The attack at No Gun Ri would have been close to this limit.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The legal issues surrounding No Gun Ri are not as clear as one would think after reading the AP version of this tragedy. The picture the AP painted was of American soldiers under the orders of their officers, indiscriminately killing civilians despite the lack of a threat from enemy forces. According to the AP, the leaders of the 1st Cavalry Division had a wanton disregard for the lives of civilians, and had standing orders to shoot civilians regardless of the circumstances. The preponderance of the evidence indicates however, that the battlefield was extremely fluid, with guerrillas in rear areas and North Koreans probing the 7th CAV's lines for several days. On the 26th of July the 1st Cavalry Division was conducting a withdrawal under pressure, and planned for air and artillery to support this withdrawal. After the 5th and 8th CAV passed through, the 7th CAV was the forward most unit of the 1st Cavalry Division and many of the soldiers seemed to believe they were under attack. With hindsight one can see that the enemy was not prepared to conduct a coordinated attack, but the soldiers of the 7th CAV did not know this. They had panicked the night before and they remained disorganized for much of the rest of the day. Subsequent days did indeed include combat over the very same area where the civilians sought refuge.

While the legal issues are murky, one should not readily dismiss the possibility that war crimes were committed at No Gun Ri. A proper examination of the legal issues should include a discussion of discrimination, necessity, proportionality, and other Law of War principles that require the expertise of one well versed in the Law of War. However, from a layman's point of view some areas of the conduct of war deserve

examination. The first area involves the principle of discrimination, which is the responsibility of combatants to respect the non-combatant status of civilians not taking part in hostilities, and to discriminate between them and legitimate military targets. According to the contemporaneous Law of War manual, hostilities were restricted to the armed forces of belligerents and the combatant had to distinguish non-combatants from belligerents, treat them humanely, and not injure lives or liberty.<sup>1</sup> Article 3 of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War dictates that belligerents will treat non-combatants humanely and prohibits “violence to life or person.”<sup>2</sup> The civilians at No Gun Ri were not legitimate military targets, but were protected persons under the Law of War and under army doctrine. The question then turns to whether the soldiers of 2-7 CAV believed they were under attack, or whether enemy combatants from within the crowd threatened them. Certainly a mitigating factor was the North Korean tactic of hiding behind refugees to mask their movements and attacking forces. This tactic violated Article 28 of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which states that a “protected person may not be used to render certain points or areas immune from military operations.”<sup>3</sup> In this context, the soldiers of 2-7 CAV had the right to engage if they believed the enemy was attacking, even if mixed in with civilians, to protect themselves and their unit.

In the case of the 24 July North Korean attack against the 8th CAV, General Gay gave an order authorizing the regiment to shoot into refugees to stop the attack. The area where General Gay’s order may come into question is in failing to properly discriminate between combatants and non-combatants. Gay could not make this determination from his position on the battlefield. He could give the authorization to fire, but the leaders in

contact had to determine how to apply force. The order that General Gay gave the 8th CAV did not necessarily apply to 2-7 CAV on the 26th. However, he may have given regimental commanders guidance on their authority in a similar case, authorizing them to make the decision on whether to fire or not, based on military necessity. In that case, Gay's subordinate commanders had to weigh military necessity against the principle of proportionality, which states that "loss of life and damage to property must not be out of proportion to the military advantage gained."<sup>4</sup> Officers who gave orders to shoot civilians merely because there might be guerrillas among them would have violated the principle of proportionality and the Law of War. Likewise, any soldier who followed such an order, or who on his own engaged civilians for fear of guerilla infiltration, may have also violated the Law of War. While the possibility exists that some officers and soldiers fired on civilians to prevent the infiltration of guerrillas, the only hard evidence that suggests this occurred is the statements made by machine gunner Norm Tinkler who admitted he fired on civilians because he was afraid of infiltrators.

The second area of concern is the failure of the 7th CAV to safeguard the lives of non-combatants caught in an engagement area in front of their defensive positions. Article 3 of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Person in Time of War prohibits certain acts against protected persons and also states "The wounded and sick shall be collected and cared for."<sup>5</sup> Also, Article 16 requires that parties to a conflict shall take steps to search for killed and wounded civilians and others exposed to grave danger, and protect them as the military situation allows.<sup>6</sup> While the 7th CAV treated and evacuated a number of wounded civilians, they did not allow for the passage of civilians. Instead, the 7th CAV kept them under a bridge even though the military situation allowed

the soldiers to get the civilians out of the area at that time and during lulls in the battle during subsequent days. Certainly the root of this problem is the order passed down that morning not to allow civilians to pass through the “battle lines.” While the intent was to control movement and safeguard both soldier and civilian lives, it had the opposite effect on civilians as implemented at No Gun Ri. Although the order was legal as intended, it was not practical in relation to battlefield realities. In this case, subordinate commanders at all levels had the responsibility to adjust the policy to fit battlefield conditions in their area of operations. Since the policy made no provision for what to do with civilians caught between two forces or used as human shields, commanders on the scene should have made adjustments to clear the civilians out of the area, or applied the principles of discrimination and proportionality once the situation arose.

Just as the 7th CAV was a microcosm of the army’s state of readiness when it deployed to Korea in July 1950, its actions at No Gun Ri were also a reflection of the lack of preparedness of the army to deal with civilians on the battlefield. The challenges faced by soldiers in Korea led to changes in organizational structure, doctrine, and training within the United States Army. These changes started before the war ended and continued to evolve over time. Organizational changes included the addition of a fifth primary staff officer to general staffs and the creation of a permanent Civil Affairs (CA) branch. Army doctrine evolved to place more emphasis on consideration of civilians on the battlefield. Organizational and doctrinal changes led to improvements in training soldiers in general, and in how to deal with civilians on the battlefield, in particular.

The army was not without pre-Korean War experience in dealing with civilians, and had entered the war with civil affairs doctrine, but did not have the organizational

structure to plan for and deal with civilians on a large scale. At the time civil affairs was more commonly known as military government, with the two names virtually synonymous. When used together, such as in Field Manual (FM) 27-5, *Military Government and Civil Affairs*, the term “military government” was always first, reflecting the primary role during World War II of providing government services for occupied territory. The army’s doctrine on civil affairs came from this World War II experience, starting with the establishment of a civil affairs training school under the Provost Marshal General in March 1942 at Fort Gordon, Georgia. Policy for the organization and use of civil affairs became bogged down in bureaucratic fighting over whether civilians or the military should have control. During the North African campaign civil affairs issues were left to the theater commander, but without adequate organization and doctrine the system proved inadequate and military government civil affairs (MGCA) became a critical issue. Secretary of War Henry Stimson sent his special assistant, John J. McCloy to North Africa to determine the nature of the problem. Based on McCloy’s recommendations the army created the Civil Affairs Division within the War Department on 1 March 1943 and also added a fifth primary staff officer (G5) for the War Department General Staff.<sup>7</sup> Later the War Department authorized field armies and corps to establish a G5 (Civil Affairs) and left the decision on whether to add them to division staffs to the discretion of subordinate commands. These organizational changes were prevalent in the European Theater, but army forces in the Pacific made no attempt at a centralized effort to reorganize military government.<sup>8</sup> This lack of development in military government in the Pacific Theater during World War II may help to explain why Far East Command and Eighth Army did not have a plan to deal with refugees at the start

of the Korean War. Simply put, these headquarters had no institutional knowledge on this aspect of military government.

Along with building an organizational structure to conduct MGCA in World War II, the army also published doctrine in the form of FM 27-5, *Military Government and Civil Affairs*, in December 1943. This manual fell short by placing most of its emphasis on military government in occupied territories or liberated countries, while saying very little about the civil affairs role on the battlefield. The object of military government was to:

1. Assist military operations.
2. Further national policies.
3. Fulfill obligations as an occupying force under international law.<sup>9</sup>

Although it mentioned control of refugees as a task for military government units, this task received little attention.

The army entered the Korean War with its World War II MGCA doctrine in tact, but had scuttled the organizational structures that supported the doctrine. Although a directorate remained with the Pentagon, military government lost its General Staff level status and did not exist outside the Pentagon.<sup>10</sup> When the 7th CAV landed at Pohang in July 1950, Far East Command did not have a G5 or military government soldiers to assist commanders in dealing with the challenges of civilians on the battlefield. By this time the army had deactivated all of its military government units, and other troops had to fill the role that military government soldiers performed in handling refugees on the battlefield. Eighth Army had to divert these soldiers, mostly from the military police and counter-intelligence corps, from their normal battlefield missions. One stopgap measure employed by Eighth Army was to create the Office of Coordinator, Protection of Lines of

Communication, Rear Area under the provost marshal.<sup>11</sup> Eventually both the Far East Command and Eighth Army added a G5 to integrate civilian considerations into operations, but by then the battle lines had stabilized and civilians presented less of a problem. Also, although FM 27-5 remained current, the primary doctrinal manuals used by the army had little to say about civilians on the battlefield. FM 100-5, *Operations*, published in 1949, did not mention civilians at all, even in a section on urban combat.<sup>12</sup> FM, 101-5, *Staff Officers Field Manual, Staff Organization and Procedure*, published in July 1950, did include discussion of the duties of the military government section, which was placed under the direction of the G1 (Personnel) for staff supervision. The G1 also assumed responsibility for relations with civilians, but the manual said nothing about the handling of refugees.<sup>13</sup> The challenges soldiers faced on the Korean battlefield soon led to several articles in professional publications, but the writers of these articles focused on civilians as a “problem” that got in the way of achieving military objectives. These writers did however provide many good tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) on how to deal with civilians to limit their impact on military operations.<sup>14</sup>

A move to make permanent organizational and doctrinal changes came immediately after the Korean War when Secretary of the Army Robert Sherman appointed an advisory committee under Paul Davies to study ways of improving effectiveness in the Army.<sup>15</sup> One of the recommendations made by the Davies Committee was for the army to place more emphasis on civil affairs and military government. Davies’ recommendations resulted in a reorganization of the army approved on 17 June 1954 and included the reinstitution of the G5 at the General Staff level.<sup>16</sup> The army published its first civil affairs manual since World War II, FM 41-15, *Civil Affairs*

*Military Government Units* in March 1954. The title reveals a subtle change in civil affairs, which changed to Civil Affairs Military Government (CAMG) instead of Military Government Civil Affairs. This development signaled a change in emphasis from military government and occupation duties to a more balanced approach that emphasized working with the local populace.<sup>17</sup> The army also confirmed these changes in the November 1954 version of FM 101-5. This manual not only included the elevation of civil affairs back to the general staff level with a G5, but also included details on the responsibilities of the G5 and the role CAMG played on the battlefield. The G5 assumed the responsibility for conducting CAMG estimates and writing a CAMG annex for operations orders, and the manual included outlines for each of these documents. Another important responsibility assigned to the G5 was that of monitoring CA training in subordinate units.<sup>18</sup> Less than a year later, the Department of the Army designated Civil Affairs/Military Government as a branch in the Army Reserve and later re-designated it as the Civil Affairs Branch in October 1959.<sup>19</sup>

Civil affairs doctrine matured with the release in 1957 of FM41-10, *Civil Affairs Military Government Operations*. This manual discussed the application of Law of Land Warfare, responsibilities of the commander, responsibilities of the G5, and the organization and functions of CAMG units. It reinforced FM 101-5 by placing primary responsibility for the civilian estimate and annexes with the G5. However, the manual went further by covering TTP on civil affairs operations to include counter guerrilla operations, control of the civil population, and a whole section on evacuation of civilians and control of refugee movement.<sup>20</sup> Along with the publication of this manual, CA advocates published several articles to educate army leaders on the value of CA. These



articles indicate a shift in mindset from seeing civilians as a battlefield “problem” to a condition of the battlefield requiring consideration for any military operation. Major General C.K. Gailey wrote in the *Army-Navy-Air Force Register* that the army had failed to appreciate that civilians are “a factor of war,” and that commanders jeopardized their success if they were inept at dealing with civilians.<sup>21</sup> In the November 1959 issue of *Army*, Brigadier General Strom Thurmond argued that in the past officers gave little consideration to the effects of civilians in the battlefield area. As a result, estimates of the situation were usually incomplete, risking mission success.<sup>22</sup>

Doctrine developed immediately after the Korean War also addressed the need to conduct training in handling civilians on the battlefield not just for CA soldiers, but for all soldiers in the army. At that time, much of what is currently considered Rules of Engagement (ROE) training fell under the broad title of civil affairs training. Doctrine emphasized that all soldiers had a CA role on the battlefield. Initially, doctrine did not include much on training, but did place responsibility on the G5 to “coordinate with the G3 for training throughout the command.”<sup>23</sup> The army first published detailed requirements for CA training in the 1962 version of FM41-15. This manual focused primarily on CA units, but more importantly gave detailed requirements to conduct CA training for all personnel. This training consisted of:

1. The mission of CA.
2. The individual soldier’s role.
3. The rules and conventions governing war with emphasis on:
  - a. Enforcement of Law
  - b. Preservation of Order
  - c. Prevention of wanton destruction of civilian property, communication, records and other items of value.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to this training, all officers received CA familiarization at their branch specific schools, and senior officers attending Command and General Staff College (CGSC) and the Army War College received additional training on:

1. Comparing systems of government.
2. Training and employment of CA units and personnel.
3. CA planning.
4. Combined and inter-allied aspects of CA operations.
5. Methods of including aspects of CA problems in instruction and training exercises.<sup>25</sup>

The army did not confine this training to the schoolhouse, but also incorporated CA training into maneuvers and training exercises.<sup>26</sup>

These developments remained in doctrine throughout the 1960s, with some modification made based on Viet Nam experience, to include more emphasis on counter-insurgency and civic action programs. However, the Viet Nam experience appears to have had a negative effect on CA. Since President Johnson did not want to call up Army Reservists to help fight in Viet Nam, most of the CA expertise remained in the United States. Those few CA units that did deploy focused primarily on civic action programs that became the *sup du jour* in the army for several years. Most of the literature written during this period concerned civic action programs and paid little attention to other aspects of civil affairs. The focus on civic action led post Viet Nam writers such as Colonel Adam Hunt to ask “Whatever Happened to Civil Affairs?” in an article in *Army* magazine.<sup>27</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Phillip Coleman stated in *Military Review* that much of CA doctrine remained untested since the army virtually excluded civil affairs units from the war.<sup>28</sup>

The efforts of these officers to place more emphasis on CA failed to convince the writers of a revised FM 100-5 published in 1976. Some military strategists touted this manual, along with the formation of the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), as the “single most important origin” of the AirLand Battle Doctrine that proved successful during Operation Desert Storm.<sup>29</sup> However, Paul Herbert’s *Leavenworth Paper* on the manual accurately points out that the Korean War “might as well not have happened for all the impact it had on the doctrine of the 1970s.”<sup>30</sup> The 1976 FM 100-5 failed to mention civilians, and the accompanying staff manuals also failed to incorporate the lessons learned from the Korean War. Also during this time another shift in language occurred with a change in emphasis from CA training to Law of War training. Post Viet Nam versions of FM 100-5 and 101-5 did not address responsibilities for this training, but in practice the Staff Judge Advocate usually provided staff supervision. The 1985 version of FM 41-10, *Civil Affairs Military Government*, merely stated that units would establish “effective training programs on Law of Land Warfare.”<sup>31</sup> One development during this period that remains with today’s army was the publication of FM 21-2, *The Soldiers Manual of Common Tasks*, developed during the overhaul of training, organization, and doctrine with the formation of TRADOC in the 1970s. An early version of the manual included several tasks on the Law of War to include “Apply the Customs of War Governing the Protection of Civilians in Time of War,”<sup>32</sup> and “Apply the Customs and Law of War Governing the Prevention and Reporting of Criminal Acts.”<sup>33</sup> Overall, while training doctrine remained consistent, practical application during collective training was not uniform throughout the army.

Resurgence in CA awareness began in the 1980s and increased in the 1990s with operations in Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Somalia, and Bosnia to name just a few. The political overtones of these operations placed a premium on soldier discipline in dealing with civilians during military operations. The army recaptured much of the past doctrine, which continued to evolve with the addition of the Civil Military Operations Center under the direction of the unit G5, and the addition of Rules of Engagement (ROE) as a doctrinal imperative, first mentioned in the June 1993 version of FM 100-5.<sup>34</sup> An emphasis towards civilian considerations during collective training began to increase in the 1990s along with an increase in CA awareness due to the nature of operations in the 1980s and 1990s. With the renewed emphasis came a shift in focus from Law of War training to ROE training. ROE training emphasized that commanders must mitigate the application of combat power based on national command policy, mission, operational environment, and commander's intent as well as the Law of War. The 1993 version of FM 100-5 placed into doctrine much of what had developed as a result of operations in Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, and Somalia. It emphasized that the army must operate with applicable ROE and conduct warfare in compliance with international law and within conditions specified by higher command. The manual also emphasized the necessity for discipline, which comes from trained leaders and soldiers, and placed the responsibility for training programs squarely on the shoulders of the commander. Additionally, the manual also addressed past criticism of ROE as too restrictive by emphasizing that every soldier always has the right to defend himself and other members of his unit.<sup>35</sup>

Along with increased emphasis on civil concerns in FM 100-5 came an increased focus on injecting training exercises with civilians on the battlefield. The Combat

Training Centers (CTCs) began including scenarios with civilians interfering with military operations, and civil affairs units were included in training with the brigades and battalions at the CTCs. The Battle Command Training Program (BCTP), focused at division and corps level staffs, also simulated civilians on the battlefield in command post exercises. Finally, the army developed specific ROE training for units participating in Mission Rehearsal Exercises (MREs) for operations in Bosnia and Kosovo.

The tragic action at No Gun Ri had a significant impact on the lives of Korean civilians and American soldiers alike. Clearly, decisions made by officers and the actions of soldiers caused unnecessary death, injuries and suffering for a number of Korean civilians. Much of this tragedy resulted from mistakes, confusion, fear, panic, and the fog of war. While it remains possible that an officer, or officers, gave illegal orders, the facts indicate that the soldiers of 2-7 CAV did not receive direct orders to shoot civilians. The subsequent days of horror for civilians trapped between the battle lines were the result of an impractical policy and the failure of subordinate commanders to adjust policy to fit the situation. The legacy of No Gun Ri continues to demonstrate the need to consider the impact of combat operations on civilians. The army's realization that they were totally unprepared to meet these challenges during the Korean War led to important changes in organization, doctrine and training. However, the army came close to losing this knowledge when the institution overreacted to the Viet Nam War and tossed out its old doctrine. Fortunately, the institution recovered and realized the importance of civil considerations, reinstituted them in doctrine, and developed effective training programs to better prepare the force to meet similar challenges.

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<sup>1</sup>War Department, FM 27-10, *Rules of Land Warfare*, (Washington D. C.: War Department, 1940), 6.

<sup>2</sup>Department of the Army, DA Pam 27-1, *Treaties Governing Land Warfare*, (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, December 1956), 135.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>4</sup>FM 27-10, 19; DA Pam 27-1, 183.

<sup>5</sup> DA Pam 27-1, 135.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>8</sup>James E. Mrazek, "The Fifth Staff Officer," *Military Review* 36, no. 12, (March 1957): 48.

<sup>9</sup>War Department, FM 27-5, *Military Government and Civil Affairs*, (Washington D.C: War Department, 1943), 3.

<sup>10</sup>James E. Hewes, *From Root to McNamara: Army Organization and Administration*, (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, 1975), 207; Mrazek, 48.

<sup>11</sup>Bermudez, 31.

<sup>12</sup>Department of the Army, FM 100-5, *Operations*, (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, August 1949), 198-200.

<sup>13</sup>Department of the Army, FM 101-5, *Staff Officers FM, Staff Organization and Procedure*, (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, July 1950), 18.

<sup>14</sup>F.O. Miksche, "The Refugee Problem," *Military Review* 31, no. 7 (October 1951): 27; Erland A. Tillman, "Control of Civilians, Refugees, and Displace Persons," *Military Review* 32, no. 7 (November 1952): 43; Oswald Stein, "The Problem of Civilian Refugees in a European War," *Military Review* 32, no. 11 (February 1953): 82.

<sup>15</sup>Hewes, 223.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>17</sup>Department of the Army, FM 41-15, *Civil Affairs Military Government Units*, (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, March 1954).

<sup>18</sup>Department of the Army, FM 101-5, *Staff Officers FM, Staff Organization and Procedure*, (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, November 1954), 18-19.

<sup>19</sup>“U.S. Army Branches,” [article on-line]; available from <http://www.west-point.org>; Internet; accessed on 2 April 2003.

<sup>20</sup>Department of the Army, FM 41-10, *Civil Affairs Military Government Operations*, (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, May 1957).

<sup>21</sup>C.K. Gailey, “Modern War Magnifies the Importance of CAMG,” (*Army-Navy-Air Force Register*, 16 February 1957).

<sup>22</sup>Strom Thurmond, “G5: The Mission of the Civil Affairs Division,” (*Army*, November 1959), 48.

<sup>23</sup>FM 101-5, (November 1954), 19.

<sup>24</sup>Department of the Army, FM 41-10, *Civil Affairs Military Government Operations*, (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, May 1962), 60.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, Thurmond, 50.

<sup>27</sup>Adam C. Hart, “Whatever Happened to Civil Affairs?” (*Army*, December 1972).

<sup>28</sup>Philip D. Coleman, “Civil Affairs in Transition...Should We Question Present Doctrine?” *Military Review* 55, no. 4 (April 1975): 42-51.

<sup>29</sup>Paul H. Herbert, *Deciding What Has to Be Done: General William E. DePuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100-5, Operations*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1988), 1.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>31</sup>Department of the Army, FM 41-10, *Civil Affairs Military Government Operations*, (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, December 1985), 2-2.

<sup>32</sup>Department of the Army, FM 21-2, *Soldiers Manual of Common Tasks*, (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, October 1983), 3-340.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 3-344.

<sup>34</sup>Department of the Army, FM 100-5, *Operations*, (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, June 1993), 2-4.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 2-3 to 2-4



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